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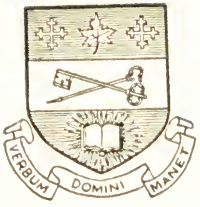

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CHRISTIAN THEISM.

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A BRIEF AND POPULAR SURVEY OF THE EVIDENCE UPON WHICH IT RESTS: AND THE OBJECTIONS URGED AGAINST IT CONSIDERED AND REFUTED.

BY THE REV.

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PREFACE.

MY reason for composing the present work is a special one. I have been frequently asked to recommend a book, level to the understandings of that large number of persons, whose engagements in the active duties of life render it impossible for them to devote themselves to special studies, which sets forth in a popular form the chief reasons on which the belief in the Being of a God who possesses the attributes which the Christian revelation attributes to Him, is founded, and points out the fallacy of the current and widespread anti-Theistic theories of the present day. This I have felt myself unable to do. Several admirable works dealing with those evidences, and answering the objections of anti-Theists, exist, which leave little to be desired; but as far as I am aware, they are, without exception, addressed to the higher orders of thought. On the other hand, smaller works, and works of less pretensions, for the most part deal with particular aspects of the question. I have, therefore, composed the present work with a view to the requirements of the class of readers above referred to, in the hope and trust that I may succeed in removing some of the difficulties and objections which, if they do not subvert their faith,

form serious causes of disquietude. The reader, therefore, must not expect to find in it discussions of high points of philosophy or science. I have appealed throughout it to the principles of common sense. When I commenced writing it, it was my intention to have produced a book of the size of my *Manual of Christian Evidences*, with the design that it should form a companion volume to it; but this, owing to the extent of the matter which at the present day underlies the Theistic controversy, I found to be impossible. Still, for the benefit of those persons for whose special use this work is designed, I have done all I can to shorten it, by excluding from it all matter which is not absolutely necessary for the completeness of the argument. I have, therefore, abstained from all discussions which are purely philosophical or scientific, and I have endeavoured to exhibit the reasons for believing in Christian Theism in a form which will commend them to those to whom God has not given either the time or the talents for entering on the higher class of studies, or those which require a course of special training for their appreciation, under the firm conviction that He has not left these without adequate reasons for believing both that He exists, and is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

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CHAPTER I.

THE SCOPE OF THE PRESENT WORK.

THE questions, Is there a God who has made this universe and all that it contains? does He exert a moral government over the world which He has created? will man survive the stroke of death? will God call him to an account hereafter for his conduct here? will his conduct here exert an influence on his condition in the world beyond the grave?—are considerations which cannot help awakening a profound interest in the mind of every thoughtful man; and can be disregarded by those only who are regardless about the future. If an existence awaits us in a future state of being, in which our condition will be affected by our conduct here, then it becomes a matter of unspeakable importance that that conduct should be so ordered as to secure our happiness hereafter. But if there is no God, or if that which is designated God is an impersonal force, destitute of intelligence, will, and a moral nature,—as is now loudly proclaimed by not a few

who justly hold a high rank in special departments of scientific research,—then there is every reason for believing that our conscious personal existence will terminate at death. In that case, full well may each of us pursue that course of life, be it what it may, which he thinks best calculated to realize his own happiness; and what that course is he must be the only judge, for an objective rule of duty binding on us there can be none. Consequently, whether a man lives what men have agreed to call a virtuous or a vicious course of life becomes a matter of personal taste and temperament. One therefore, whose aspirations are naturally noble, will consider a life of corresponding elevation his supreme good. Another, whose tastes are grovelling and sensual, will pursue that course of life which he thinks will afford him the greatest amount of immediate pleasure and enjoyment; for amidst the shortness of life, and the uncertainty of its duration one thing only is certain: that, after its brief day has passed, the elevated and the base, the saint and the sinner, will sleep a sleep of unconsciousness, from which there will be no awakening, and in which pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, will cease for evermore.

The question of the existence of a God, such as Christian Theism affirms to exist, being thus profoundly important, it is my intention to discuss it in the present work in a form level to the under-

standings of those whose engagements in the active business of life give them neither time nor opportunity for entering on a course of special study; for such persons it equally concerns as those who have the time and talents necessary for studies of this description. I shall, therefore, avoid everything in our modern Theistic controversies for the appreciation of which such studies are necessary before it is possible to form a judgment of the validity of the reasonings involved in them. Numerous works, dealing with the higher forms of this controversy already exist; works of profound interest to those whose intellectual powers, and whose freedom from the engagements of ordinary life, enable them to devote themselves to such investigations. But such is not the lot of the masses of mankind. They have neither the intellectual training, nor the leisure necessary for the investigation of such questions. The ordinary vocations of life, its struggles, its labours, and the intervals of refreshment necessary for enabling those engaged in them to enter afresh on their daily recurring duties, are sufficient to monopolize almost the entire time at their command. For such investigations therefore, even if they possessed the intellectual training necessary for their successful prosecution the requisite leisure is wanting.

Are there, then, no reasons level to the capacity of such, which will afford them firm grounds for

believing in the existence of a God, to whom they are responsible for realizing the purpose for which He has brought them into being? Or is the question of His existence—a question of the profoundest interest to every individual—one which that comparatively small body which constitutes the intellectual aristocracy of mankind is alone competent to adjudicate upon, and determine; and are the masses left dependent upon them for information and for guidance? That this last alternative is the true one, it is difficult to believe; for inasmuch as those who claim to constitute this intellectual aristocracy, differ widely in the conclusions at which they have arrived, the question at once confronts the inquirer: To which portion of them is he to look for guidance and direction? The determination of such a question would involve a rehearing of the entire case; because it is impossible to determine which of those who hold opposite opinions on this subject can be safely followed as an infallible guide to truth, without having previously formed a judgment on the validity of the reasons on which his opinions profess to be founded. This would constitute each individual the ultimate judge of the validity of the reasonings in question; and thus would leave the difficulty precisely where it found it. But surely if there is a God, who is not a "mere force, but a moral being who holds man responsible for his actions, it is incredible that He should have left

the masses of mankind dependent on specialists for a knowledge of His existence, or that He should not have given them reasons for believing in it amply sufficient to command the assent of that reason with which He has endowed them. St. Paul at least was of this opinion, for he affirms that God had not left Himself without witness (Acts xiv. 17), and that the 'invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity'" (Rom. i. 20); and in His address to the philosophers at Athens this is assumed throughout.

The following truth, obvious as it is, is too often overlooked in the theistic controversy:—It by no means follows, because certain proofs of the existence of a God are level to people of ordinary understanding, that they are not in the highest degree conclusive. Among not a few there is a strange tendency to value what is rare, and to esteem things in proportion as they can only be the exclusive possession of a few. But the careful observer of human life will arrive at the conclusion, that the best of our pleasures and enjoyments are those which are most widely diffused. In a similar manner I shall endeavour to show that the reasons for believing in the existence of a God, which are capable of commending themselves to the masses of mankind, are the strongest and most conclusive; and that the arguments which

have been adduced to prove that they are wanting in validity will fail to commend themselves to men of ordinary understanding.

Such being the object of the present work, I shall confine myself to those arguments which do not require a course of special study for their due appreciation. In a word, I shall appeal to the principles of common sense; such for example, as influence our actions in the ordinary affairs of life. With respect to objections I shall only notice those which are likely to exert an influence on those whose engagements in active life render them incapable of forming a judgment on questions of high philosophy, such as the theories adverse to Theism, which are industriously propagated among the masses by a numerous class of philosophers and scientists. A vast amount of highly abstract reasoning has been introduced into the theistic controversy by persons of this description respecting the validity of our primary intuitions. I shall not ask the reader to enter into such discussions; but I shall assume that our primary intuitions are true, whatever may be the mode in which they may be supposed to have originated; the latter being a question wholly independent of the former, though the opponents of Theism have done their utmost to confound their truth with the question of their origin. In a word, I shall appeal to such principles, and have recourse to such reasonings, as constitute our practical guides in life;

and on which, even unbelievers, while they dispute their validity when adduced as proofs of the being of a God, or of the existence in man of a conscience, or moral sense, habitually act. I shall, therefore, assume, if they are sufficient guides to conduct us in the ordinary affairs of life, as they undoubtedly are, that reasonings based on similar principles must constitute sufficient evidence of the being of a God.

In making these observations, let me guard against the idea that it is my intention to say one word in depreciation of those discoveries of modern science which have so vastly enlarged our views of the universe; on the contrary, I cordially welcome them as a kind of fresh revelation. They have disclosed to us the fact that it is not limited by the bounds of earth and sky, or of human vision as former ages thought; but that it is vast beyond human comprehension, embracing the infinitely great and the infinitely minute, extending from the universe of suns and planets, in numbers numberless, to the minutest particle, which no human eye, even by the aid of the most powerful instrument which man has invented for enlarging his sphere of vision, has seen or can see. All these testify alike of power, order, adaptation, purpose; and give us additional reasons for believing, not only that a God exists, but in the boundlessness of His power, His presence, and His wisdom. Nay, even the objections which unbelievers have urged against His being, or if not against His

being, against the belief in a God who bears any relation to mankind, have helped to clear away numerous errors of the past, which have caused His infinitude, His character, and the mode of His working to be imperfectly apprehended. Let every one, therefore, to whom God has given the endowments and the leisure necessary for the study of such subjects, prosecute it to the utmost, and he will be rewarded by ever-increasing disclosures of the Creator's glory.

There is one thing before I conclude this portion of the subject to which I must draw special attention, because it is far too frequently overlooked. I allude to the distinction between the facts which have been ascertained, by careful scientific investigation in conformity with accepted scientific methods, as unquestionably true, and the theories which have been propounded as accounting for their origin. The facts thus verified are worthy of all acceptation; and justly take the rank of accepted truths. The theories which have been propounded as explanations of these facts, stand on a wholly different basis. This is particularly the case when scientists have ventured to dogmatize, as they far too often have, on subjects which lie outside the sphere of their special studies. In such cases their theories, affirmations, and conjectures, have no more value than those of ordinary men of sound judgment; and of far less value than those who have devoted themselves to the special studies on which, without any special

qualification for doing so, the former have undertaken to dogmatize. This caution is especially necessary at the present day, because there is a widespread practice of attempting to bear down the ordinary believer in Christian Theism by some name deservedly eminent in some particular department of scientific research, who ventures to propound theories and make affirmations on points which have formed no portion of his special studies. Such persons have loudly charged theologians with dogmatizing, and not unjustly; but when they venture to make assertions outside the range of those scientific pursuits, for their eminence in which they owe their celebrity, they commit the very fault which they condemn in others. Many men of great celebrity in the scientific world have strongly condemned all abstract studies, especially metaphysics; but when they propound a theory of the origin of the facts which they investigate, ultimately resolving itself into a theory of the origin of the universe, they plunge into a number of metaphysical questions, the study of which they repudiate. Science can tell us much respecting the order and the secondary agencies by which the universe, and especially the world in which we live, has been brought into its present form; but respecting its cause, it can tell us nothing. Science deals with facts, and facts only; the inquiry into their causes, and the origin of things, lies outside its limits.

Before I conclude this chapter, I would offer one additional caution: Be careful not to undertake the defence of positions which are not essential to the issue. This is a danger to which zealous controversialists are particularly liable, and one which I have endeavoured to guard against in the present work. Not a few of the defenders of Theism and Christianity would have done well if they had attended to this necessary caution. Both, but the latter especially, have received nearly as much damage from the indiscretions of friends as from the attacks of foes. It is obvious that the wider the line of defence is extended the more difficult it will be to defend it. Let me illustrate my meaning by a metaphor derived from warfare. As long as a firm hold can be kept on the key of a position, an unnecessary extension of the outworks becomes most dangerous, for a force adequate to defend the one may be utterly inadequate to defend the other. Thus, by unduly extending the line of your defence, you incur the danger of giving your opponent the prestige of apparent victory, by affording him the opportunity of capturing some outwork which is immaterial to the defence itself. In the present work it is my intention to occupy in force those positions which form the key of Christian Theism, under the firm persuasion that if I can maintain these, others may be safely left to take care of themselves.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE ON WHICH RESTS OUR BELIEF IN THE BEING OF A GOD.

BEFORE entering on our immediate subject, it will be necessary to explain to the reader the nature of the evidence on which the being of a God rests, because misconceptions on this subject are very widespread. I observe, therefore, in the first place, that it is not capable of being proved by that kind of evidence which is called demonstrative.

Attempts, it is true, have been made to prove His existence by a course of reasoning of this description ; but it is now the all but universal opinion of competent judges, that the attempts to do so have proved failures. At any rate, it is certain that the reasoning processes by which it has been attempted to give a demonstrative proof of His existence, are far above the comprehension of the overwhelming majority of mankind, and, therefore, as far as our present argument is concerned, are valueless. Our inability to prove His

existence by evidence of this description has frequently been urged against the validity of the proof; one class of unbelievers affirming that, if a God exists, we ought to be able to give a demonstrative proof of His existence; and another, that that portion of the evidence on which, up to a very recent period, Theists have most strongly relied, has been proved by the discoveries of modern science to be valueless. To these objections I reply,

That the kind of evidence which is called "demonstration" is not the only kind of evidence which is calculated to convey to the human mind the conviction of absolute certainty. This conviction is equally produced by that kind of evidence which is called moral, or circumstantial. This being a point of the greatest importance, in relation to the Theistic controversy, I must endeavour to set before the reader, as briefly as I am able, the nature of these two kinds of evidence, and to estimate the power of each to produce on our minds the conviction of absolute certainty.

Demonstrative evidence consists of two kinds. The first is founded on two of our primary conceptions, namely, quantity and extension. In connection with these arise a number of propositions, designated axioms, that is, propositions of which our minds, as they are at present constituted, not only affirm their absolute truth, but that their contradictory must be absolutely false. Of this kind of proposition the

axioms on which the science of geometry is based form the best possible illustration. Thus, as soon as our minds are capable of forming the conception of "whole" and "part," they cannot help perceiving that the affirmation that the whole is greater than its part is, and must be, absolutely true; and that the contrary proposition, which affirms that the part is greater than, or equal to, the whole must be absolutely false. The same is equally true of the other axioms of Euclid, except the twelfth, which, although beyond all doubt true, cannot be said to be self-evident. So also with respect to our primary conceptions of number. Thus, as soon as we are capable of understanding what one, two, three, four, and five mean, we know, with a certainty which nothing can exceed, that two and two are equal to four; and that twice two cannot by any possibility be equal to five. Truths of this kind are incapable of having any addition made to their certainty by any process of reasoning. From these as a basis, aided by a few simple definitions and a still smaller number of postulates, of which it is impossible to doubt the possibility—as, for example, "that it is possible to draw a straight line from one point to another"—have been deduced a vast number of additional propositions, which are not in themselves self-evident, but the truth of which is established as indubitable by the most rigid deductions of our logical faculty from the

axioms, definitions, and postulates above referred to. This is what, in mathematical language, is called "demonstration," that is, when a number of propositions follow, as a matter of necessity, from the truth of other propositions which our minds cannot help recognizing as true. This kind of evidence, however, is only possible when the conceptions on which we reason are simple and uncompounded, such as our primary conceptions of space, quantity, and number. But when they are of a complicated character, as is the case in every other department of thought, various elements of uncertainty enter into our conclusions, and our deductions from them cease to possess the character of demonstrations. Hence it is that it is impossible to prove the existence of a God by any course of reasoning which is in this sense demonstrative. It is equally impossible to prove the truth of any particular fact by a course of reasoning of this description. The truth of these and similar things can only be established by reasonings of an entirely different character.

The second kind of evidence to which the term "demonstration" is applied in scientific treatises admits of being described with greater brevity. A truth is said in scientific language to be demonstrated, when it is capable of being verified by its being subjected to certain well-known scientific tests, and thereby to its being brought under the ultimate

cognizance of the senses. Such verifications are only capable of being applied to material things, which alone constitute the proper subject-matter of the physical sciences, and are inapplicable to things mental, moral, and spiritual, for these latter belong to a wholly different sphere of thought. Consequently, it is impossible by any such process to demonstrate the existence of a God, or of the soul of man. When the existence of the latter is denied, as it has been denied, because its existence cannot be proved by the use of such tests, it proves either ignorance of the entire subject of mind and its phenomena on the part of him who makes such an assertion, or that he covertly assumes that nothing exists in the universe but matter and its forces, which is neither more or less than to beg the question at issue. No believer in the existence of spiritual beings is so foolish as to imagine that their existence is capable of being either proved or disproved by any test which is capable of being verified by the senses; for the conception which the human mind forms of spiritual existence precludes the possibility of applying to it tests of this description, because our primary conceptions of matter and mind are directly antithetic to one another.

We now come to the consideration of that kind of evidence which is denoted by the term moral or circumstantial, cumulative, etc. On it our belief in everything which is not the result of our primary

intuitions, or on strictly logical deductions from those intuitions, or on things which are not capable of being subjected to the test of our individual senses, rests. I use the word "individual," because our belief in what other men affirm that they have seen and heard, or tested by their senses, rests on evidence of this description. It has been truly said that probable evidence is the guide of life, for it is an unquestionable fact, that if we refused to act upon it, and demanded that kind of evidence which is called demonstrative, before we engaged in action, all human activity would come to a standstill. Past experience must be set aside as worthless, our hopes for the future quashed, and all testimony as a proof of fact invalidated. As it is on evidence of this kind that our belief in Theism rests, we must give a careful consideration to its nature and value.

Probable evidence varies in degree as to its power to produce conviction. Its extreme limits are, absolute certainty on the one hand, and what we call a bare probability on the other. Between these two limits lie various degrees of assurance of the truth of a proposition, or of the occurrence of an event. A bare probability that an event may occur, or a proposition be true, conveys to the mind an assurance so weak, that to act upon it would be to trust simply to chance; but when a number of probabilities meet together, and concur at the same time and place, they produce a conviction approximating

to certainty, exactly in proportion to the frequency of their occurrence; and when this concurrence extends over a large number of instances, a conviction of certainty which is absolute and complete.

The power of this kind of evidence to produce conviction will be better illustrated by an example than by any amount of mere abstract statement. Let us suppose four dice to be thrown once into the air. In this case it is within the limits of probability, though the probability is a very low one, that they may all fall with their aces upwards, and it would be unjust to charge the person who threw them with being guilty of a fraud. But if the operation were performed thrice with the same result, a suspicion of unfairness would be justly aroused. Still even this would not be such conclusive evidence of fraud as would justify a jury in returning a verdict of guilty. But if the same operation were repeated ten times, and each time the dice fell with their aces upward, we should feel *absolutely certain* that they were loaded; and a few repetitions of this process would produce in any one of ordinary mental endowments as firm a conviction of certainty, as is produced on the mind of the mathematician of the truth of any proposition proved by the most rigid process of demonstration.

Let me now take an illustration from ordinary life. It frequently happens that a murder has been committed, but no one has witnessed it. The murderer can only be convicted on what is designated

circumstantial evidence. In that case the possession of some one thing, as, for example, a revolver from which two shots had been fired, the bullets in the remaining chambers exactly corresponding with the bullets extracted from the body of the murdered man, though sufficient to rouse a very strong suspicion of guilt, would be evidence wholly inadequate to prove that the man in whose possession such a revolver was found, was the murderer. In such a case there would be the counter-probability that inasmuch as numbers of revolvers are manufactured with chambers of exactly the same size and with bullets fitted to them, the revolver in question may have been purchased for a purpose perfectly innocent, and that the possessor of it may have loaded it and discharged two of its chambers for his amusement, leaving the remaining ones undischarged. But, if on the other hand, a revolver was found near the place of the murder; if the balls extracted from the murdered man corresponded exactly with balls found in the possession of the supposed murderer; if it could be proved on reliable testimony that he had only a few days before purchased both the balls and the revolver; if in addition he was seen hastening from the place of the murder at the time when it must have been committed; if stains of blood which the analysts pronounced to be human blood were found on his clothes; if it could be proved that he had pawned a watch which was indisputably the

watch of the murdered man; or, if he had in his possession trinkets or clothing which had been his property, or that he had disposed of them; if the marks of footsteps about the place of the murder corresponded exactly with the impression which would be made by his boots; and if it could be further proved that his circumstances were such as to have induced him to commit the murder,—no one possessed of ordinary acumen could entertain a doubt that the man in whom these circumstances met, though taken one by one they would only justify a strong suspicion of guilt, was the murderer.

This feeling of certainty, though produced by a wholly different process, would be quite as great and be as fully justified as that of a mathematician in a truth which he had arrived at by the most rigid process of mathematical demonstration. The reason of this is that the human mind is so constituted as to be incapable of believing that a number of circumstances, such as I have presupposed, can by any possibility meet together by hap-hazard in the same person. So certain is such a concurrence of circumstances as a guide to our practical judgments, that even an unbeliever, who theoretically rejects evidence of this description as proof of the being of a God, would, I think, not hesitate, if he were sitting on a jury, and a body of evidence of this description were adduced in proof that the man in whom it all met was guilty of murder, to return a verdict of guilty,

though no eye had seen him commit the crime. This, however, as I shall show hereafter, is a very imperfect representation of the force of the evidence which the adjustments, adaptations, and correlations of the universe furnish to the existence of an intelligent Creator.

It not unfrequently happens, however, when a jury return a verdict on evidence, equally or little less strong than that which I have presupposed, that a number of persons come forward and impugn the justice of the verdict, on the ground that the evidence is only circumstantial and not direct. This, I think, can only arise from prejudice on the part of the objector, or from his surveying the parts of the evidence one by one instead of estimating their conjoint force taken as a whole. I draw attention to this because objections on precisely similar grounds have been urged against the evidence of Theism. It should be observed that circumstantial evidence, such as above described, is far more reliable than direct testimony. It is an old but true saying, that facts cannot lie, whereas testimony not only may, but frequently does; and mistakes as to personal identity are not uncommon, even on the part of those who are sincerely desirous of speaking the truth. All this weakens the force of direct testimony, but leaves that of moral evidence untouched.

The above observations have an intimate bearing

on those evidences of Theism which act with the greatest force on the masses of mankind. I allude to what is commonly, though perhaps somewhat inaccurately, called "the argument from design." I say "somewhat inaccurately" because it has been frequently objected that the word "design" involves a *petitio principii*, though, after all, the objection is little better than a cavil. I shall, therefore, in the course of this argument, substitute for the word "design" some other term against which no exception can be raised, and use in its place the words "adjustment" and "adaptation," which merely state a fact which must be conceded alike by Theists and anti-Theists.

As this argument is one which is more level to persons of ordinary understanding than any other which is adduced in proof of Theism, it need not surprise us that very numerous attempts have been made by anti-Theists during the present century to dispute its validity; and to show that these adjustments and adaptations, the existence of which, let it be observed, is not disputed, do not prove that they must have originated in intelligence, but that they may have been brought about by the interaction and mutual struggle, during the ages of the past, of the unintelligent forces of the universe, acting in conformity with invariable law. I propose, therefore, to give to this portion of the evidence, and to the objections which have been urged against it, a careful consideration in the course

of the following chapters, under the firm conviction that it is a proof which is calculated to convey to the masses of mankind an assurance that a God exists, who is not a mere force destitute of intelligence and volition, but who is an all-powerful, all-wise, and intelligent Creator.

The nature of the argument founded on the analogy above referred to, which I shall endeavour to set before the reader, may be briefly stated thus. As in the case of the dice the inference would be inevitable that they were loaded, if twelve of them, when thrown at hap-hazard into the air, fell twenty times in succession with their aces upwards, although the observer had no means of ascertaining the fact, either by weighing them, or measuring them; so from the adjustments, adaptations, and correlations with which the universe everywhere abounds, the inference is no less certain that it must be loaded likewise; and that that with which it is loaded is the presence, and the directing hand of a God, to whose power and intelligence it is impossible to assign limitations. This inference is no less certain, though we cannot make His presence visible to our bodily senses, or weigh it in our scales. The evidence is of the same kind as that on which, in the absence of direct testimony, a jury does not hesitate to return a verdict of guilty against a criminal, even when the forfeiture of his life is the result; and only differs from it by the overwhelming weight

which is imparted to it by the fact that the adjustments and adaptations of the universe are not limited to some ten or twelve concurring facts, which, when taken in combination, lead to the same inevitable conclusion, but which exist in numbers past human comprehension, all concurring to prove the existence of intelligent volition. Innumerable complicated adjustments and orderly arrangements not only fitted to realize a particular result, but which actually do so, the effect of the hap-hazard meeting together of matter and forces devoid of intelligence and volition is unbelievable.

Finally. As it is impossible to prove the existence of God by that kind of evidence which is called "demonstrative," it is equally impossible to do so by that which is called "direct." The reason of this is obvious. Our only rational conception of Him is that of a being who is everywhere present at every point of space, and whom, therefore, it is impossible to see with mortal eye. This being so, the belief in His existence must be an inference of some kind. I am aware that it has been urged by some that it is an intuition of the human mind prior to all reasoning. I cannot think so, for then the intuition of His existence would be universal, which it certainly is not. I fully admit that the universality—or the all but universality—of religion proves that there is something in the constitution of human nature which has suggested, even to the

most uncultured races, the existence of a superhuman being, although their conceptions of such a being are for the most part of a degraded character. But this differs widely from a direct intuition of His existence, which, if it were real, would be in all places everywhere alike. I trust, however, that I shall be able to prove from the authoritative declarations of conscience, when it affirms a law of duty binding on man, and makes him feel self-condemned for its violation, not only that a being exists to whom the duty is due; but that he is a being possessed of the attributes which Christian Theism ascribes to God. But even here, the only thing of which we have a direct intuitive knowledge, is the affirmation of conscience proclaiming a law of duty. The existence of a being in whom all duty and obligation centre is an inference, though an obvious one. Similar remarks are applicable to the evidence on which we believe that our conscious existence will survive the dissolution of our bodies.

It has often been urged, and will doubtless be urged again, if a God exists to whom we are responsible for our conduct here, and if our conduct here will be attended with important consequences to ourselves in an existence beyond the grave, that He ought to have given us evidence of this far more cogent than that which we possess, either by making our belief in His existence, and of our

survival one of our primary intuitions; or else that the evidence of it should be such that we cannot help believing in it. In reply to this objection, I observe, first, that we are very inadequate judges of what God ought to have done, as far as providing us with intuitive knowledge, or affording us on these points evidence which cannot be resisted, is concerned; and that He will hold men responsible only for the light which He has imparted to them, and not for that which He has withheld: and secondly, that His not having done so, by no means invalidates the proofs which He has given us of His existence, and of the duties due to Him by us as our Creator and Preserver. The only real questions for our consideration are: Is the evidence which we possess sufficient to afford us adequate reason for believing that a God exists to whom we are reponsible for our conduct here; and has He not, as our Creator, a right to our devoted service? Does He care, or is He indifferent whether we realize the purpose for which He has created us? Will the characters which we have formed here follow us into the world beyond the grave? If these questions must be answered in the affirmative, the survival of our conscious existence after death is a certain consequence, although our reasons for believing in it are not demonstrative, but are indefinitely stronger than that moral evidence on which we act with the fullest assurance in the affairs of ordinary life.

CHAPTER III.

AGNOSTICISM CONSIDERED AND REFUTED.

THE system known by the name of Agnosticism is widely diffused in the upper regions of thought, and is exerting no little influence in promoting unbelief in its lower strata. As it lays the axe to the root of all Theistic investigations by assuming that they are nugatory; that the question whether there is a God such as Theists presuppose transcends the limits of the human understanding, and that when we ascribe certain attributes to God we are guilty of what is called Anthropomorphism, that is, that we manufacture a God who exists nowhere but in our own imagination; it is necessary before proceeding further that I should offer a few observations on its general principles.

While it concedes that a belief in the existence of a First Cause of the Universe, which is itself uncaused,—which, if we please, we may call God—is a necessity of thought; yet because it is infinite and man's intellect is finite, it affirms that we

neither know, nor can know, anything about its nature or its attributes. We must, therefore, beware of attributing to it either personality, wisdom, will, a moral character, the exercise of any providential care over the universe of which it is the Cause, or even any purpose or design in its formation. From these principles it follows that the existence of such a being need not exercise any influence on human conduct, and that the entire course of our lives may be safely, perhaps I ought to say wisely, regulated without any reference to it (I must not say "Him," for that would be to ascribe to it personality); and that the proper answer to every question which our curiosity may suggest respecting it, is that we neither know, nor can know, anything about it, and therefore that all inquiry is as much lost labour.

From these principles the very portentous conclusion follows, that the God in whom Christian Theists believe is neither more nor less than the projection of the highest attributes of man, magnified indefinitely, into some unknown substratum, and then designating this figment of our own imaginations God; or, as a very popular writer of this school of thought has most profanely put it, that the God of Christian Theists is a kind of magnified Lord Shaftesbury. It need hardly be said that a God of this kind is as much one of our own making as an idol is of him that fashions it. The propounders of these views object to be called Atheists. They

say, "No; we neither know, nor can know, anything about God. All that we affirm is that the entire subject transcends the limits of our understandings to say whether He exists or not; and consequently that the God in whom you believe is a figment of the imagination." Such a system, therefore, may be not incorrectly designated "Moral Atheism."

This entire system of thought is based on reasonings of a very abstract character, so abstract that they require special endowments, and a special training, to enable a judgment to be formed as to their validity. Into these mazes, therefore, I shall not ask the reader to enter. But as the objections against Christian Theism which have been founded on their basis have been loudly trumpeted in popular lectures, and in works which are easily accessible, by certain individuals who hold a high reputation as philosophers and scientists; and there is, therefore, no small danger that they may impress those who are incapable of forming any judgment respecting the value of the reasonings adduced by the sheer weight of authority, it will be necessary that I should point out that the principles and reasonings in question lead to results which are repugnant to that common sense which constitutes the only guide in life of the overwhelming majority of mankind.

In order that I may avoid involving the reader in a labyrinth of metaphysical puzzles, I must endeavour to set before him the principles on which

this system is based in the simplest form, and free from language which is difficult to translate into vernacular English.* I think that they may be reduced to the two following affirmations :—

1. That it is impossible for the finite to comprehend the infinite, or even to frame to itself any image of it which can enable us to constitute it a definite subject of thought. This being so, inasmuch as the human intellect is finite, and the very conception of God involves the idea of His infinity; it is impossible, even if there is a God, for finite man to attain any knowledge of His nature, or of His character, which is real.

2. Inasmuch as the idea of God involves on His part the possession of the following attributes: namely, that He is Infinite, that He is the Absolute Being, and that He is the First Cause of the Universe; and that these three conceptions, when viewed as united in the same being, involve a

* To give the reader an idea of the unintelligible language in which the propounders of this system of philosophy express themselves, I quote the following words from Mr. H. Spencer's explanation of the mode in which, according to the principles of the agnostic philosophy, the present universe has been evolved, namely, by "*a change from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity through continuous differentiations and integrations.*" These words will enable the reader to understand what I mean when I speak of "language difficult to translate into vernacular English." Commenting on them, Mr. Goldwin Smith writes: "This universe may well have heaved a sigh of relief when, through the cerebration of an eminent thinker, it had been delivered of this account of its origin."

number of contradictions,—this renders all reasonings on the subject nugatory and invalid, and consequently all knowledge of the realities which exist in Him impossible. Perhaps it is necessary that I should inform the reader who is unaccustomed to this kind of speculation, that by the words, "the Absolute Being," is meant a being who exists devoid of all relations to every other being, a thing which it is alleged must be true of God if He has existed throughout the eternity of the past, prior to that creative act by which He brought the universe into existence.

Respecting these positions I observe that none are more ready than Christian Theists to admit that our knowledge of God, though real as far as it goes, is not perfect knowledge, and that there are realities in His being, which transcend the powers of our finite intellects to grasp. This, however, is a difficulty which is by no means peculiar to Theism, but is one which extends over the entire range of human knowledge, every department of which runs up into some ultimate, the real nature of which man's finite intellect is unable to fathom. If, therefore, the objection, that, because our knowledge of God is partial, or because it runs up into problems, the solution of which transcends the powers of our finite understandings, is valid against Christian Theism, it is equally so against every kind of knowledge which we imagine that we possess. The

reasonings in question, therefore, if carried out to their legitimate consequences, would involve us in universal scepticism. But between perfect knowledge, and total inability to know anything which is real, a great gulf lies; and I feel convinced that no amount of abstract reasoning will induce men of ordinary understanding to believe that because there are actualities in the Divine existence which transcend the power of our finite minds to penetrate, that therefore we can know nothing about Him which is real. It has been affirmed by a well-known popular writer that to a God who is unknowable we may render worship of a silent kind; but I think that my readers will be of opinion that a God, respecting whom we can know nothing, is incapable of producing in the human mind the feeling of either adoration, reverence, or love, or of exerting any influence on our conduct.

The unsoundness of the basis on which this system of philosophy rests may be made clear to the ordinary reader by the aid of a very simple illustration derived from a subject with which he is well acquainted; I allude to our conception of space. It is impossible to conceive of space as limited; for if in imagination we attempt to assign a boundary to it, the question at once presents itself, What is the boundary of that boundary? and so on for evermore. On the other hand, owing to the limitations of the human mind, it is impossible

for it to picture to itself an image of a space which is destitute of limits. From this the conclusion has been drawn by certain metaphysical philosophers. that our conception of space is no representation of any reality which exists outside the human mind; and that if any reality exists, outside our subjective consciousness, we can know nothing about its nature which is real. Whatever effect such reasoning may have on those who delight in courses of abstract reasoning, I cannot but think that they will fail to commend themselves to people of ordinary understanding, who, whenever they set themselves in motion find space to be a great reality. If such a person were to travel from London to Calcutta, is it credible that either he or even a metaphysical philosopher could be induced to believe that that through which he was persuaded that he had been travelling several thousand miles had no objective existence outside his own brain? Our inability, therefore, to penetrate into all the secrets of the infinite, or to image it in our own minds in its infinity, does not hinder us from attaining a partial knowledge of it which is real. Such is our conception of space, and such is our knowledge of God, real as far as it goes, but imperfect.

From the Agnostic position that because God is infinite and man finite all real knowledge of God is impossible, a number of conclusions have been deduced which directly contradict the positions on

which its reasonings are based. Thus, the Agnostic argues because man's conceptions are finite they cannot represent any reality which exists in the infinite; and inasmuch as the conceptions of personality, will, intelligence, a moral nature, and various other attributes which Christian Theists habitually ascribe to God all involve finiteness, they can denote no realities which exist in the infinite. From this, as I have observed above, he adduces the additional conclusion that a wise man will do well to frame his conduct without any reference to a being who is thus unknown and unknowable. But if these positions are true, it is evident that our knowledge of God is not inconsiderable. The Agnostic will object that all this is merely negative knowledge. Granted; but the knowledge of what a thing is not is frequently a very important kind of knowledge, especially when, as in the case before us, may be deduced from it the positive conclusion that the whole course of human life may be regulated without any reference to that being which this system of philosophy allows us to designate God.

The position that the phenomena of the universe are manifestations of its First Cause, respecting which we can know nothing but the bare fact of its existence, is one which is in striking contradiction to our ordinary modes of reasoning which we find verified in our daily experience. It is admitted by Agnostics that we know not a little about phenomena; in fact,

they affirm that all our knowledge, both ordinary and scientific, is either a knowledge of phenomena or a deduction from it. How then, I ask, is it possible that we can know nothing about the Cause of the universe, of which all its phenomena are manifestations? In every other department of knowledge we invariably draw inferences from the phenomena which come under our observation, and we are of opinion that they enable us to attain some knowledge which is real respecting the Causes which have produced them. We may not be able to know everything about them, but our experience proves, when phenomena are accurately observed, and when in drawing our conclusions due weight has been attached to them as a whole, that our knowledge, though it may be only partial, is yet real. Our habits of drawing inferences of this kind are so universal—they form the very guide of our practical life—that everyone can find abundance of instances of having done so in his own experience. To it, therefore, it will be better that I should refer the reader, rather than adduce a few striking instances, which at best can form only an imperfect representation of what is the habitual practice not only of those who are endowed with ordinary common sense, but even of agnostic philosophers themselves. On what principle, then, I ask, is it that the only exception against the validity of reasonings of this kind is, when we draw inferences from the phenomena of the universe respecting the

character of its Cause, *i.e.* of God? The knowledge of Him which we are able to arrive at from this source may, I should rather say must, be imperfect knowledge, because our knowledge of the phenomena of the universe is confined to that very small portion of it which comes under our observation; but this does not hinder it, as far as it goes, from being real.

I must now offer a few remarks on the objection, so constantly urged by Agnostics, that Christian Theism is neither more nor less than anthropomorphism, or, in other words, that the God whom Christians worship is a man-made God.

The word "anthropomorphism" is compounded of two Greek words—*ἄνθρωπος*, man; and *μορφὴ*, which means, form, shape, or figure. The abstract term "anthropomorphism," has no word which corresponds to it in Greek; but out of these two words is compounded an adjective—*ἀνθρωπόμορφος*, which means of human form; and a verb *ἀνθρωπομορφόω*, the meaning of which is, to form a thing like a man, or to clothe it in human shape. As long, therefore, as this verb is used in its primary meaning, with the intention of denouncing as utterly inadequate and unreal, every term which has been applied to God, except by way of analogy, or metaphor, which represents Him as possessing the form, shape, and figure of a man, it may be cordially adopted by every intelligent Christian Theist, for none now believe that the Most High possesses body, parts, passions, or a

human shape. But the word as it is now employed by unbelievers has acquired a very extended meaning, and is used as a denunciation of every form of theistic belief which ascribes to God any attribute of man, even the highest and the noblest, such as personality, volition, free agency, intelligence, holiness, justice, or benevolence ; because, as it is alleged, these conceptions being finite human ones, can denote no corresponding realities in a being who is infinite. For these and similar reasons, a numerous body of unbelievers seem to think that to denounce Christian Theism as anthropomorphism is a sufficient proof that the belief in it is founded on a delusion. No weapon is more extensively used by its opponents than this kind of denunciation.

With respect to this objection, I observe,

First : It proves too much, for the following reason. All our conceptions, whether of things in heaven or of things on earth, cannot be other than human conceptions, because as human beings, we possess no other. If, therefore, for this reason we can have no assurance that there is any objective reality corresponding to them, the whole of our knowledge of external things would be invalidated. Into the highly abstract discussion of the relation between the perceiving subject and the perceived object I shall not enter, because it is one which is not only highly perplexing, but which can have no practical interest to the readers whom I am addressing. But if, as it is urged by the Agnostic,

that because our conceptions are finite human ones they can denote no corresponding realities as they exist in God, I observe that it by no means follows because our conception of a thing is finite that it is incapable of denoting a reality as it exists in the infinite. Thus, as I have observed above, our finite conception of space does not cease to denote an objective reality corresponding to it, because we cannot conceive of space otherwise than boundless. In a similar manner, when Theists affirm that God's power, wisdom, and benevolence are devoid of limitations, and His holiness and justice perfect, it is absurd to affirm that our human conceptions of these attributes can denote no corresponding realities in Him, or, as some theologians have even taught, that benevolence, holiness, and justice, as conceived of by man, may denote one thing, and that when these attributes are ascribed to God they may denote something widely different from our human conceptions of them.

Second: The objection, viewed as one against Christian Theism, is valueless. Christian Theists believe that God has created man in His own image and likeness. If this is true, it follows as a necessary consequence that the highest attributes of man must have something which corresponds to them in the Divine nature. Unless, therefore, the Agnostic can prove (which he cannot) that God cannot have created man in His own image, the objection owes its entire

plausibility to the fact that, somewhere in the course of the reasoning by which it has been attempted to be established, the point requiring to be proved has been covertly assumed. The question, therefore, resolves itself into the following alternative: Which is the more probable: That there is a God who has created man in His own image and likeness; or that man, with all his mighty powers of intellect, his free agency, and his moral nature, has been evolved out of we know not what by forces destitute of freedom, intelligence, and morality?

Let it be observed when Christian Theists affirm that there are realities in God, such as intelligence, freedom, a moral nature, holiness, justice, and benevolence, the same in character as the corresponding attributes in man, that they conceive of them as free from all the imperfections as they exist in ourselves. Thus, while intelligence in man is confined within limits which are relatively narrow, intelligence in God extends to all things actual and possible; while man's free agency is limited by certain boundaries which it cannot transcend, the Divine free agency is free from all limitations; while holiness and benevolence in man are imperfect, holiness and benevolence in God are absolute and complete; while, owing to our inability to penetrate into motives, and to form a correct estimate of the circumstances which have influenced the formation of character, human justice,

even with the best intentions on the part of the judge, is only too frequently imperfect,—justice in God, being free of any limitation of knowledge, is absolute and perfect. But because this distinction exists between the Divine and the human, it is absurd to affirm that realities corresponding to our human conceptions cannot exist in God; or that those who believe in a God in whom such attributes exist, are guilty of the folly of worshipping what is neither more nor less than a magnified man freed from the imperfections of humanity.

We have a striking example of what may be justly designated a man-made God in that system of much-vaunted lofty philosophic thought, known by the name of Positivism. I refer to it here for the purpose of showing the absurdities into which high philosophy can go, when it deserts the regions of common sense. Though closely allied to Agnosticism, its principle is essentially atheistic. Its founder, Comte, affirmed that human knowledge is exclusively confined to phenomena, that it is impossible to penetrate to anything beyond them, and that we can know nothing about causes. Consequently it is impossible even to affirm that a First Cause of the Universe must exist. I need scarcely observe that a system of this kind differs little from Atheism pure and simple. Yet the instincts of human nature proved too strong for the gifted

author of this system, and he felt himself forced to admit that a religion of some kind was a necessity for man. Having, as he believed, utterly destroyed the belief in Theism as a worn-out figment of the times of ignorance, he proceeded to propound, in place of all religions which rest on it as a basis, what he designated the Religion of Humanity, in which human nature itself—*i.e.* all the men and women who have existed in the past, who exist in the present, and who will exist in the future—is set forth as the object of worship; and for its due celebration, he instituted a Church provided with an elaborate system of rites, ceremonies, and sacraments, and with a body of philosophers as priests, who were to wield a power even more absolute than that which has been ever claimed for its priesthood by the Roman Catholic Church. This strange deity still continues to be an object of worship to the orthodox portion of his philosophic followers; while others, who accept the general principles of his system of philosophy reject it. I think that the reader will be of opinion that this system, though elaborated by one who was really a profound thinker, and accepted by others whose abilities it is impossible to deny, is simply grotesque.

Before concluding this part of our subject, it will be desirable that I should offer a few observations on the language which is applied to God in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, because the mis-

understanding of its nature and import, gives to the objection we are considering the only appearance of plausibility as an objection against Christian Theism. Not a few of its readers fall into the error of imagining that the terminology which its writers have used respecting Him, instead of being metaphorical, and not unfrequently accommodated to the mental condition of those to whom it is addressed, is intended to denote realities as they exist in God. This error is also widely diffused among uneducated unbelievers, and forms perhaps the most dangerous weapon which they direct against Christian Theism in the eyes of the ignorant, and the unwary. This point is one of very considerable importance, as everyone whose duty it has been to deal with this class of unbelievers, is only too painfully aware. What, then, are the facts?

1. In numerous places in these Scriptures, the highest conceptions which the human mind is capable of forming are applied to God. Of these, Psalm cxxxix. ascribes to God a universal presence in the universe, as far as it was known to the writer, and a perfect acquaintance with every thought of man; Isaiah xl. ascribes to Him greatness and creative power beyond human comprehension, and a constant presence and energy in providence; Solomon's dedication prayer affirms the inadequacy of every temple made with hands to contain Him,

whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; and the revelation of His self-existence, and of His moral perfections made to Moses as recorded in Exod. iii. and xxxiv., may be referred to as examples out of a vast number of others equally decisive.

2. On the other hand, He is frequently spoken of under various limitations, and even as possessing a human form, a bodily organism, and a local presence. Of this form of speech, Gen. xviii., which contains the account of Abraham's intercession for the cities of the plain, may be referred to as a striking example. I therefore quote it: "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know." In the immediate context one who bears the Divine name is represented as appearing in human form, and even as partaking of a meal, and, after the colloquy, "as going His way."

3. It not unfrequently happens that while in one set of passages self-existence, unchangeableness, universal presence, and the highest attributes of man, are ascribed to God, in numerous others are freely attributed to Him some of the lowest passions of human nature, such as rage, fury, jealousy, etc., and that, too, by the same writer. Not only is this so, but He is even described,

when speaking of Himself, as animated by not a few of the passions of our frail humanity. Of this mode of speaking, the student of the prophets, especially of Jeremiah, cannot fail to find numerous examples.

From these facts I draw the following conclusions:

I.—That it is incredible that the same writer should have ascribed to God the highest perfections which are conceivable by man, and have attributed to Him many of the lowest passions of human nature, if He had intended to affirm that these latter denoted realities corresponding to them in the Divine Being. The only rational conclusion, therefore, is that He used them either as metaphors, or as part of the poetic imagery in which He wrote, or as accommodations to the low mental condition of those whom He was addressing.

II.—A large number of the expressions which ascribe to God a bodily form, bodily organs, a local presence, and others of a similar character, are obviously metaphorical.

III.—Not a few of them are analogies, as for example when it is said that God's eyes are in every place, that His ears are open to every prayer, that He smells the smell of a sweet savour, and that, like a warrior, He takes up the spear and stops the way against them that persecute; or that His sword is bathed in blood.

IV.—Not unfrequently when human passions of a

low type and a limited local presence are ascribed to God, they are accommodations to the mental condition of those to whom they are addressed, that condition being such as to render them incapable of receiving anything higher or better. The fact that several of the utterances recorded in the Scriptures are accommodations, is admitted even in these Scriptures themselves.

V.—It is asserted again and again by the writers of the New Testament, that the Old Testament Scriptures were not intended to contain a revelation of absolute truth; but, on the contrary, that its revelations are fragmentary, relative, accommodated to the mental condition of those to whom they were addressed; and intended, when they had fulfilled their temporary purpose, to be superseded by a higher and a better. They are best described as containing the history of the gradual education of the Jewish people from low to higher conceptions of the Divine nature and character, until they became capable of receiving the revelation of the Divine character and perfections made in the Person, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Finally: The objection because there are depths in the mode of the Divine subsistence, and in God's providential government of the universe, which are unfathomable by man's finite understanding, that therefore we cannot attain to any knowledge of Him that is real, is utterly futile. How can it be

otherwise than that such depths should exist in Him? If there are such profundities in the existence even of an atom, which philosophers and scientists have failed to sound, much more must there be still profounder ones in Him by the energy of whose will all things are upheld in being, and were at first created. Surely a philosophy and science which, while it admits that the ultimate reality about atoms and molecules is shrouded in mysteries which it cannot penetrate, yet affirms that its knowledge of their activities is not inconsiderable, is in flagrant contradiction to our common sense, when it teaches that because we cannot know everything about God, we can know nothing about Him that is real; and that all inquiries respecting His character, His attributes, and His relations to ourselves, must be a mere useless expenditure of labour; and from such premisses boldly to draw the conclusion that it will not only be safe, but even wise to frame our course of life without any reference to Him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARGUMENT FROM CAUSATION.

I AM now in a position to address myself to the immediate subject of this work, which is to set forth in as brief a space as possible the evidence, which ought to be sufficient to convince men of ordinary understanding, that a God exists who is a moral being, and to whom they will be responsible hereafter for their conduct here. I shall first attempt to deal with the argument from causation; and as this will constitute the most difficult part of my subject, I must ask the reader's deepest attention to the following reasonings. I observe, therefore,

That the human mind is so constituted, that whenever it witnesses an event, or what is called in the language of philosophy a phenomenon, it cannot help inferring that its existence is due either to a single cause, or to several causes acting in combination, *i.e.* to a force or a combination of forces, adequate to its production.

This is no theory, but a matter of our daily individual experience. An occurrence happens. We instantly say to ourselves, "Whence came it? What caused it?" We discover that the immediate causes are phenomena. The conclusion is inevitable, that they must have owed their existence to other causes, and so on in an ascending series, until we are forced to arrive at the conception of a Cause, itself uncaused, which possessed in itself sufficient potency to have brought into existence all the phenomena of the past and of the present.

Against this conclusion, there are only two possible alternatives:—

First: That these successions of finite causes have gone on operating during the eternity of the past, *i.e.* that they have never had a beginning.

Second: That the first of the series having been at some period, however remote, non-existent, sprung into existence spontaneously, *i.e.* was self-caused.

With respect to the first of these alternatives, it will be sufficient to observe that our minds are so constituted that it is inconceivable that while each set of a succession of finite causes has had a beginning, that the whole succession can have had none.

To the second a similar remark applies. Our minds are so constituted that we are incapable of believing that an occurrence, or phenomenon, is a

chance production which, having been once non-existent, has sprung into existence spontaneously, *i.e.* without a cause.

It would be foreign to my purpose to enter on this work with an inquiry respecting the origin of these beliefs, or of the primary intuitions of the human mind, or to attempt to vindicate their validity. To do so would involve my readers in a number of highly abstract metaphysical discussions. I shall only observe that, be their origin what it may, they are either truths to which as we are at present constituted we cannot help giving assent, or they are direct perceptions of our consciousness, which form to us the highest of certitudes. The fact that it is so, is sufficient for my argument, without entering into the question of how it has become so. Volumes have been written on the latter question, without arriving at any conclusion respecting it which commands anything approaching general assent. If any of my readers should entertain a doubt that the beliefs above referred to are necessities of thought, let him try if he can conceive of the possibility of the occurrence of an event without a cause adequate to produce it; or of a succession of causes which have been operating without a beginning during the eternity of the past; or of a succession the first of which sprang into existence spontaneously, and then ask himself whether he has not habitually acted on the

conviction that such things are impossible, and found this conviction verified by the facts of actual experience. The contrary assumption contradicts the beliefs of everyone, except that very small portion of mankind who have endeavoured to reason themselves out of them, or who, owing to their low intellectual condition, are unable to form a distinct conception of what is meant by such terms as events and causes.

To make the following reasoning clear, it will be necessary to state distinctly what is the meaning which the common sense of mankind attaches to the word Cause. Unless we are under the bias of some particular theory, we invariably associate the idea of efficiency with that of cause. By efficiency, I mean a power residing in the cause, which is adequate to produce the effect, and which actually produces it. Further, it is an essential part of the conception of a cause, that it exists prior to the event of which it is the cause.

The following definition, therefore, will be sufficiently accurate for all practical purposes. A cause is a thing previously existing, which has not only the power to bring into existence something not previously existing, but which has actually produced it. The first of these is, in philosophic language, called the antecedent ; and the second, the consequent.

From the above positions, the following important conclusions follow—

1. Whatever exists in the effect, exists either

actively or in potency, in the cause. Otherwise it must either have produced itself, which is absurd; or some other cause must be invoked to account for the existence of such things in the effect which did not exist either actively or potentially in the cause.

2. The cause of an event may be the result of the action of a number of previously existing causes, and for the most part it is so; and so through a series indefinitely long; and each number of the series must possess in itself a potency to bring into existence the effect, which prior to the action of its cause was non-existent. But the idea that a succession of finite causes can have been operating throughout the eternity of the past without any beginning to their activity involves a contradiction. Hence we are compelled, as a necessity of thought, to assume the existence of a cause, which is itself uncaused, but which possessed in itself a potency adequate to produce the universe and all that it contains.

3. An event or phenomenon is, perhaps, never the production of a single cause, but of a multitude of causes acting in combination; and these of a long succession of other causes, which become more numerous the higher we ascend in the series of events, and therefore more and more difficult to set before the mind in their completeness.

4. Care must be taken to discriminate between

causes and necessary conditions of the existence of things, otherwise confusion of thought will be the certain result. Let me illustrate my meaning by an example. Space is the necessary condition of the existence of everything material ; but to speak of it as the cause of their existence would be absurd. Necessary conditions limit the action of causes, and are capable of diverting their activity into this or that particular channel ; but to speak of them as causes contradicts the idea which is inherent in the term itself, namely, the possession of a power in something previously existing, adequate to bring into existence something which did not previously exist ; or to mould previously existing elements into a new form ; or to modify the action of previously existing forces.

5. It is most important to observe that law is not a cause, though it is frequently spoken of as if it were one, alike by philosophers, scientists, theologians, and even in common conversation. Attention cannot be too strongly directed to this fact, because it is frequently used by all these classes of persons as if it were equivalent to force ; nay, it is frequently personified even by those who deny that the First Cause of the Universe is a personal being. Thus philosophers and scientific men are frequently in the habit of affirming that the laws of Nature effect this or that ; that feeble man is unable to resist their overwhelming power ; and that they remorselessly crush

him, when he comes across their path; but the truth is, that whereas the forces of Nature effect much, the laws of Nature can effect nothing.

What, then, are the laws of Nature? They are nothing but generalized expressions, which denote the invariable order of the occurrence of phenomena, and the invariability of the action of its forces. Thus what is called the law of gravitation, is merely an expression, which denotes the order in which material things fall under the influence of the force of gravitation, the force being the efficient agency, while the law neither does nor can effect anything; the forces of Nature crush; its laws are powerless; they can neither do good nor do evil. A similar inaccuracy frequently occurs in speaking of the laws of a state. What are they? They are simple rules which command or forbid particular classes of actions, and in which certain penalties are denounced against the disobedient. Metaphorically, we are in the habit of speaking of the laws as doing this or that; and even as pronouncing sentence on a criminal; but if we use accurate language—and the use of inaccurate language has introduced endless confusion into the theistic controversy, and into that about miracles—its laws effect nothing; it is the forces which are behind them, such as the judge, the jury, the police, the prison warder, and the executioner, which are the only things which operate efficiently. Let it, therefore, be kept steadily in mind that the laws of

Nature merely denote the invariable order in which certain consequents follow certain antecedents, and are therefore devoid of all causal power.

A very simple illustration will make it evident that the idea of efficient agency is inseparably united with that of cause in the minds of all, except a few speculative philosophers. Let us suppose that an extensive warehouse has been burnt to the ground, with no inconsiderable loss of life and property, and that a jury is impannelled to inquire into the cause of the calamity which after careful investigation returns the following verdict: A man who was employed to perambulate the building at night carelessly threw an imperfectly extinguished match into a mass of combustible matter, which had been improperly allowed to accumulate in a dangerous place. This took fire, and from thence the conflagration spread over the entire building.

Who, or what, then, was the cause, and what were the necessary conditions of the fire, and of the mischief that followed?

The primary and direct cause of the fire was the act of the man who threw the match, which had inherent in it a potency sufficient to kindle a flame, in a mass of combustible matter. The match, therefore, with the properties inherent in it, was its secondary cause. The existence of the combustible matter in the place where it was, the character of the building and of its contents, was the necessary

condition. Apart from the presence of the combustible matter in the place where it was, the man and the match would have effected nothing. The cause, then, of the destruction of the lives and property was the action of the man and of the match, exerted on a set of conditions suited to produce combustion meeting together at the right time and place, their existence and concurrence being the result of an indefinite number of causes and conditions.

Having settled these preliminary points, I will now set before the reader the evidence which the principle of causation furnishes in proof of the existence of a God. All that is essential in it admits of being stated in a brief space.

The universe, and all which we behold in it, consists of a mass of very complicated phenomena. Compelled by that belief in the principle of causation which each of us intuitively feels—it matters not, as far as this argument is concerned, what may have been the origin of this belief—we arrive at the conclusion that none of these phenomena are self-caused; and we are no less absolutely certain that there was a time when they first came into existence. Hence we infer that they must have been produced by a cause, or by a combination of causes, possessing a potency adequate to their production. On further investigation we arrive at the conclusion that these must have owed their existence to successions of previously existing causes. But as our minds are so

constituted that we are incapable of believing in a succession of causes, while each member of the series has been brought into existence by something previously existing—that the series itself never had a commencement, we are compelled to assume the existence of a First Cause which, being itself uncaused, *i.e.* self-existent, is the cause to which the entire succession of causes, to which the existing phenomena of the universe, owe their existence, and of which they are manifestations.

It matters not, as far as this argument is concerned, how remote this First Cause may be from existing phenomena, or how complicated may be the succession of intervening causes, which interpose between them and it. However long the chain, the constitution of our minds compels us to believe that it is finite; and as a succession of finite causes which never had a beginning is inconceivable, we are driven to the conclusion that a First Cause, itself uncaused, must exist, for it is unbelievable that existing things could have sprung spontaneously into being out of absolute nothingness; or, to put it in the form of the well-known proverb, *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* I cannot better express this truth than in the words of Mr. H. Spencer, the Coryphæus of Agnosticism: "The assumption of the existence of a First Cause of the Universe is a necessity of thought." This First Cause we Theists designate God.

I have heard it urged by a certain class of

unbelievers that it is necessary to give an account of the origin of this First Cause. To this I answer, that if it had an origin it would cease to be a First Cause, and so we should be asked to give an account of that which caused it, and so on for evermore. Far more plausible is the objection, that a Cause, which is itself uncaused, presents equal difficulties to formulate in thought, as a succession of finite causes, which never had a beginning. One of these alternatives, however, must be true, notwithstanding any difficulties with which the conception may be attended. I shall only observe that the difficulties are not equal. The conception of a First Cause, itself uncaused, contains in it nothing contradictory; for as Mr. Spencer affirms, it is a necessity of thought; whereas a succession of finite causes which never had a beginning, each member of which was non-existent prior to its being caused, involves a direct contradiction in terms.

I will now set this argument before the reader in a less abstract form. Modern science has rendered an eminent service to Theism by showing that the present universe cannot have existed from eternity; and although the time may be indefinitely remote, that it will certainly come to an end. The nebular theory which has found acceptance by an overwhelming majority of scientists teaches us that the present universe was once a fiery vapour cloud, which, under the influence of forces inherent in it, has in the course of ages gradually condensed into suns and planets,

one of which, our earth, has become a fit habitation for living beings, while it is highly probable that this is the case with others also. A time, therefore, once was when this earth, and every form of vegetable and animal life, existed not. No less certain is it that the universe in its present form is gradually wearing out. Suns, as sources of heat and motion, are parting with their energies. The time, therefore, will come when the earth will become too cold to be a fit habitation for animal life. It will then become a desolation like the moon. Owing to the loss of energy, it, and every one of the planetary bodies, will ultimately be absorbed into the sun. The sun, too, notwithstanding the fresh supplies of heat which will be imparted to it by these catastrophes will, in the lapse of ages, get cooler and cooler, thus gradually losing its energies, until it is absorbed by some mightier body. This body is ultimately destined to a similar fate, and so the entire universe of suns and planets, until, all its energies being equalized, it becomes a homogeneous mass, destitute of motion and of life, and destined to be the region of everlasting silence, unless some mightier power, external to itself, exists, which is capable of again imparting to it motion, and thus of enabling it to enter on a fresh series of evolutions.

The earliest state of things, therefore, to which science professes to have penetrated is this fiery vapour-cloud, which according to anti-theistic theories

must have contained within itself, either actively or potentially, the germs and possibilities of all future existence. But even this could not have been the primeval state of things; one must have preceded it and caused it, and so on for evermore, unless we assume the existence of a Cause, itself uncaused, which gave it being. The existence of such a power is rendered certain by the consideration that, if this fiery mist was the original state of things, or anything composed of similar materials, it would in the course of the eternal ages have completed all its possible developments, and have passed into that state of homogeneity, silence, and desolation to which, as this philosophy teaches, this present universe is doomed; and from which, having no power of its own to rescue it, it must continue for evermore, unless there be some power external to it, to intervene, and impart to it fresh motion and life. It follows, therefore, that such a power must exist, because, during the ages of the past, successions of such catastrophes must have occurred, bringing about a state of things motionless and lifeless. From one of these the existence of the present universe, with all its energies and motions, proves that there must have been a resurrection. Further: if this hypothesis be correct, the existence and active energy of such a power is the only thing which can rescue the ages of the future after the energies of the existing universe have passed into quiescence and

its materials into a state of motionless homogeneity from everlasting silence and desolation. It follows, therefore, that this universe, with all its numberless adjustments, adaptations, and correlations, must have owed its origin to a Cause, Itself Uncaused, adequate to its production. That Cause is God.

The course of reasoning from the principle of causation is so conclusive that we need not be surprised that a determined attempt has been made to invalidate it. It has been objected, that our knowledge is confined exclusively to phenomena, and that we neither know, nor can know, anything about causes. Thus, it is alleged that what we call causes are nothing more than invariable sequences of phenomena, and that all that we really know is that one event or occurrence invariably precedes another, and that the latter never occurs without being preceded by the former. From this the inference which has been drawn, that the one is caused or brought into existence by the other, is a mere figment of our ignorance.

Perhaps the reader will be of opinion that the best refutation of this objection is its simple statement, for it is in flagrant contradiction to the whole of our convictions as they are verified in practical life. The objector himself habitually acts on the assumption that the position in question is practically false. To take an obvious example; if he is suffering from some severe pain and sends for a medical man to afford him relief, his object is to get

him to remove not what he considers to be a mere antecedent of the pain but its actual cause. Thus, if he is suffering from toothache, he believes that a decayed tooth by its action on the nerve is the cause, and not the mere antecedent, of the pain and actually produces it ; and that its removal will afford him relief. The tooth is extracted, and the relief follows. Similarly, if a person carelessly throws a stone and thereby inflicts an injury on another, no one in his senses would consider the person who threw the stone a mere antecedent, but the direct cause of the injury, and would hold him responsible for it. To speak of holding a mere antecedent or a necessary condition responsible is to talk nonsense. There is nothing like bringing theories of this kind to the test of facts.

But the assertion that we neither know, or can know, anything about causes directly contradicts one of the greatest of our certitudes. If our observations are exclusively concentrated on things external to ourselves, then it is correct enough to affirm that all that we discern with our senses is a succession of phenomena following one another in an invariable order. But things external to ourselves are far from constituting our only sources of knowledge. Besides these there is the information furnished by our self-consciousness. From its testimony we know, with a certainty which nothing can exceed, that we ourselves are causes and that we possess a power to

originate action ; that we are not mere forces acting in conformity with an iron law of necessity, but voluntary agents, having it in our power to act or to forbear acting. Thus, when we turn the action of our minds on ourselves, and observe the results which follow from our mental activity, we feel, with the fullest assurance of certainty, that we are capable of acting on the external world ; and that apart from man's resolve to act on it, and this resolve being carried into effect, the course of things would be entirely different from that which it actually is ; and that the centre of this power is our will. The act of our wills in exciting to action, whether it be on things internal or external to ourselves, constitutes our primary idea of force or efficient agency. The mode in which this power is exerted is as follows. We first will or form a resolution to do this or that. Our understandings then plan the means whereby this purpose can be carried into execution. When this has been determined on, the will, through the nervous system, conveys its orders to the hands, the feet, or to some other part of the body. These execute its injunctions ; and various results, some of which are of the highest importance, follow. Of all this we are as certain as we are of our own existence. Thus, I am absolutely certain that I am the cause of the written characters now before me. How came they there ? Once there was nothing but a blank sheet of paper. Now it is covered with written characters. Their existence

is due to my resolve to write on a given subject. Having thus resolved, I made what I have written the subject of careful deliberation, and thereupon formed the plan of the present work. Having done this, my will—that is, I, myself—communicated its orders to the fingers by means of the nervous system, and thus set them in motion. These laid hold on the pen, dipped it in ink, and the paper which was previously a blank, became covered with characters. Of all this and the various other processes connected with the composition of this work, I am as certain as I am of my own existence. In other words, I am not the mere antecedent of the existence of the work, but its cause.

The only thing, therefore, of which we have direct and immediate knowledge as possessing causal or efficient power is ourselves, the originating force being what we designate "an act of volition." Hence we draw the inference, when we see similar results produced by beings not ourselves, that they must have originated in a similar manner. But when we speak of things which are necessary agents as causes, we do so by analogy; they produce results only, but are destitute of the power of originating action. The only thing of which we have experience as possessing this power is will. From this we draw the inference that all force originates in will, and is a manifestation of it.

But inasmuch as the conception of a rational

will involves that of a permanently existing conscious personality, which not only now exists, but which has existed the same conscious personality, say, during forty, fifty, or sixty years of the past; a bold attempt has been made to invalidate the argument from causation by affirming that we have no knowledge that we are persons, in the sense which we ordinarily attach to the word person. The objection assumes, that what we mistake for our personality is neither more nor less than a succession of states of consciousness, which are never for two moments together permanently the same. I fully admit that if this strange position could be proved to be true, it would invalidate the argument from causation. But the paradox involved in it is so absolute, and the contradiction to universal experience so complete, that I may safely leave it to be dealt with by the common sense of my readers. Strange is it that those who have propounded the theory in question did not see that the idea of states of consciousness involves a permanent something which perceives, and a something which it perceives. The argument, therefore, proves the very thing which it is intended to disprove. I shall, therefore, only observe that the consciousness which each of us possesses, that we not only exist, but that we have existed the same persons during considerable intervals of time, during which every particle which has composed our bodies

has changed several times over, makes short work with philosophic, scientific, and popular materialism, and proves that there is something within us which is capable of originating action, of which the blind forces of Nature are incapable. The First Cause of the Universe, therefore, must be possessed of intelligent volition.

In conclusion, I will briefly set before the reader some of the most important conclusions which follow from the position laid down by Mr. H. Spencer, that the phenomena of the universe are manifestations of its First Cause, the existence of which is a necessity of thought. One of its phenomena is intelligence: intelligence, therefore, must exist in its First Cause. Another is the moral nature of man: a God, therefore, must exist who is a moral being. Another is free agency, rational will, personality, and a power of self-determination—for all these exist in man—these, therefore, must be manifestations of Him from whom man derives his being. Another of its phenomena is that its irrational forces act in conformity with invariable law, from which mode of action its order springs: invariable law, therefore, must be an expression of the Divine will, and the love of order must exist in God. Similar illustrations may be adduced to much greater length; but these will be sufficient to illustrate the nature and character of the argument from causation.

CHAPTER V.

THE VALIDITY OF THE PROOF WHICH THE ADJUSTMENTS, ADAPTATIONS, AND CORRELATIONS OF THE UNIVERSE AFFORD TO THE EXISTENCE OF AN INTELLIGENT CREATOR.

THE evidence furnished by the order, adaptations, and correlations of the universe has always been considered to be one of the strongest reasons for believing in the existence of a God. This being so, anti-Theists at all times, but especially during the present century, even while they admit their existence in numbers passing human comprehension, have strained their utmost efforts to prove that they have originated in the interaction of a number of unintelligent forces; and, therefore, that they furnish no proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator. Such being the case, it will be necessary to prove that this argument, which is commonly called "the argument from design," is indubitably valid; and that the reasonings which have been adduced, and the theories which have been propounded in opposition to it, are destitute of any rational foundation.

Before entering on the argument itself, it will be desirable that I should define the meaning which I attach to the words "adaptation" and "correlation," in this and in the following chapters.

By an adaptation I mean an instrumentality composed of a number of parts acting in combination, which is fitted to produce a certain result, which actually produces that result, and which, if one or more of the parts were either misplaced or absent, would produce no result at all, or one wholly different.

I have used the word "adaptation" rather than "design," because it has been objected that the expression "the argument from design" involves a *petitio principii*. This objection, however, cannot be urged against the word "adaptation;" because, whatever diversity of view may be entertained respecting the origin of an adaptation, it cannot be denied that it exists as a matter of fact. The only question open for discussion is: Does the existence of an instrumentality, consisting of a number of parts fitted to produce a particular result, prove that its originating cause must have been a being possessed of a power and intelligence adequate to produce the adaptation; or is it conceivable that it can have been produced by a number of forces destitute of intelligence and volition, meeting together *at the fitting time and place*. Besides this, a further and all-important question arises, which demands

solution, to which the anti-Theist is bound to return an answer which will be satisfactory to our reason: What do those adaptations, which he himself admits to exist in the universe in numbers past human comprehension, prove when contemplated in their totality? Is it believable that they have resulted from the interaction of a number of blind forces destitute of intelligence and volition?

By a "correlation" I mean a number of mutually related adaptations, so adjusted to one another as to form a complicated whole, which act in mutual harmony, and which, apart from this harmonious action, would either damage or render nugatory the action of the whole. Of this correlation of parts and functions to one another, the bodies of animals may be referred to as a striking illustration. We ourselves are only too sensible of the results which follow from the derangement of one or more of these adaptations, for when one member suffers, the result is that the whole body suffers with it. The question, therefore, for our consideration is:—What do these adaptations, thus adjusted to one another so as to form a complicated whole, prove? Is it conceivable that they can have been the result of the interaction of a number of forces destitute of volition and intelligence.

Before proceeding further, I must ask the reader's attention to the actual position of the argument. It cannot be denied that the action of an intelligent

Creator gives an adequate and rational account of the origin of the order, the adaptations, and the correlations with which the universe abounds. How, then, stands the case between the Theist and the anti-Theist? If, for the sake of argument, we assume that the theory which is propounded by the latter, affords an adequate and a rational account of their origin, it by no means disproves the existence of an intelligent Creator. All that it does is to leave us in the presence of an alternative. The question then arises: Which is the more probable; that the order, adaptations, and correlations of the universe have owed their origin to a being possessed of a power and intelligence adequate to produce them; or that they have originated in an eternal struggle between a multitude of unintelligent forces, acting under an iron law of necessary agency, from which it was impossible that they could deviate? When the position of the controversy is stated thus, there can be no doubt which alternative will command the assent of an overwhelming majority of those who are endowed with ordinary intelligence.

It is important that the reader's attention should be drawn to this, because it is far too generally imagined that the anti-theistic theory of the origin of the universe, disproves the existence of an intelligent Creator, whereas all it does is to propound an alternative theory which is beset with difficulties in every direction, leaving the question open which

is most rational to believe, that the order, the adaptations, and correlations with which the universe abounds, have owed their origin to the interaction of a number of blind forces during the eternity of the past, or to the energy of a being possessed of a power and intelligence adequate to produce them. But it is not my intention to let the argument for the being of a God rest on a choice between these alternatives, however much the evidence in favour of the one may outweigh that in favour of the other; but it will be my duty to show that the anti-theistic position is utterly untenable, and that the theistic one alone rests on a rational foundation.

First, then, let us inquire with respect to orderly arrangements, What do they prove? I answer, this is what universal experience affirms. We have never seen a complicated orderly arrangement produced by the action of a number of blind forces. I use the word "complicated" because it is possible that an orderly arrangement on a small scale may be the result of that which we designate "chance." Thus, as I have observed above, it is within the limits of possibility that twelve dice thrown into the air hap-hazard may fall with their aces upwards; but although such an occurrence is abstractedly possible, it is very doubtful whether it has happened once in ten million times. But if this operation were repeated a hundred times, and each time the dice fell

with their aces upwards, no rational man, no, not even the greatest sceptic, would entertain a doubt that they were loaded. But these hundred repetitions of the fall of the dice with their aces upwards is but a faint representation of the force of this argument when applied to the structure of the universe, where orderly arrangements, and these very complicated ones, abound in numbers past human comprehension. From this the inference is irresistible to all, except a few speculators who are committed to the maintenance of a particular theory, that the universe must have owed its origin to the action of an intelligent being, who must have directed the forces of the universe so as to have enabled them to produce its innumerable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations.

Persons of ordinary intelligence will think this view of the case conclusive, but as the principle on which it rests is of the greatest importance in its bearing on the theistic argument, it will be desirable to exhibit its force by a few illustrations.

Let us suppose that we enter a large library, in which the books are arranged on shelves. On one set of shelves are the theological works, on another the historical, on another the philosophical, on another the scientific, on another the poetical, and on another the novels and works of fiction. On further observation we find that each of these classes of writings is arranged under a number of distinct

heads; and that the different books are placed in order according to the dates of their publication. What, I ask, is the inference which common sense cannot help drawing from the phenomena in question? I answer that such arrangements afford incontestable proof of the presence of intelligence. If it were suggested, that the books had been thrown together at hap-hazard, and that some one had picked them up just as he found them, and placed them on the shelves in the order in question, the person who made the suggestion would be considered to be attempting to impose on our credulity.

One more illustration will suffice. Let us suppose that a manuscript of eight hundred pages is lying on a table immediately before a window, that the wind is blowing a gale against it, that the window is inadvertently opened; and that the wind scatters the manuscript in every direction. Let us further assume that after this disaster we leave the room, and that after a considerable interval we enter it again. To our surprise we find every page in its proper place, page 1 being at the top, and page 800 at the bottom, of the pile of papers. On inquiring who has been meddling with the MS. during our absence, we are informed by a servant that no human being except herself has entered the room; that she has not touched the papers, but that the wind after scattering the pages in every direction finally deposited them in the

order in which we find them. What, I ask, is the opinion which every sane man would form respecting this story? Doubtless that the servant who gave this account of the matter made an affirmation which she knew to be untrue.

What, then, is the conclusion which we instinctively arrive at? That all complicated orderly arrangements and adjustments must have been the result of the action of an intelligent agent, although we have not seen him at work in their production. Although the grounds on which our conviction is formed are different, we are no less firmly convinced of its truth, than we are that two and two make four and cannot make five. No sceptic doubts the validity of this argument in the affairs of common life. Objection is only made to its adequacy when it is adduced as affording unquestionable evidence that the universe is the work of an intelligent Creator.

Let us now consider the argument from the innumerable adaptations with which the universe abounds. What do they prove? I answer, that the common sense of mankind, with the exception of a small number of philosophers and scientists, and it may be also of those savage races who are in the lowest state of mental degradation, affirms that intelligence must have presided over their production; and that the more complicated is the adaptation the stronger is this conviction.

The chances against a combination of materials at hap-hazard, such as is necessary to form a very simple adaptation, are very numerous; but when adaptations are complicated, the conviction which they produce that they cannot have originated in the casual meeting of a number of forces destitute of intelligence and volition, is equal in force to that produced by a mathematical demonstration. But the adaptations with which the universe abounds are not only extremely numerous —so numerous that they meet us at every point, turn where we will—but highly complicated. No array of millions of millions is capable of presenting to our minds even a faint idea of their number. The chances, therefore, against the concurrence of the materials and the forces necessary to form these combinations are practically infinite. We are, therefore, incapable of believing that they can have originated in the chance meeting together of a number of molecules and forces destitute of purpose, volition, and intelligence, or in any combination of them.

The importance of this argument as affording proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator, arises from the fact that it not only commends itself in the strongest manner to our reason, but also from its being level to men of ordinary understanding. It requires no exercise of abstract thought for its appreciation, and the evidences on which it rests

are all close at hand; and there is no occasion to enter on a minute research to find instances of these adaptations, for they meet us at every turn. Wherever we cast our eyes, whether to the heavens above, or to the earth beneath, or when we direct our attention to the structure of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, we observe they are full of innumerable instances of them. Nay, we may find them nearer home in the structure of our own bodies, where they exist in numbers numberless. It is true that while we are in health, and the parts of which our bodies are composed act harmoniously, we are too apt to forget how fearfully and wonderfully we are made; but let only some minute portion of their organism get deranged, and we are painfully reminded of the necessity that these wondrous adaptations of part to part should work together in harmonious combination. Their doing so means health; their failure to do so, disease and death.

A few more very simple illustrations will do more to impress the reader with a sense of the importance of this argument, as affording proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator, than any mere general description of it. Anti-Theists themselves, when it suits their convenience to do so, readily avail themselves of it. We have all heard of what is called the "Stone Age." Men of science, whether they believe or disbelieve in the

existence of a God, are all but unanimously of opinion that its remains prove that man has existed on the globe at a period indefinitely more remote than the 4,004 years which has been placed in the margin of our Bibles as the time of his first creation. What, then, are the media of proof?

The answer is, a number of flints which have been found in a great variety of places at different depths, and in company with various remains, which prove the high antiquity of the period when they were deposited in the localities where they have been discovered. These flints are alleged, and alleged truly, to bear unmistakable marks of adaptation, so as to have fitted them for certain purposes of savage life. From these facts the inference has been drawn that they were fashioned at a period long prior—it is impossible to say how long—to the commonly accepted date of the creation of man.

On the other hand, it has been urged by those who have endeavoured to maintain the commonly accepted system of chronology, that these flints owe their peculiar shape to the action of natural causes; and, therefore, form no proof of the existence of man in a state of savagery. To this it has been replied, that although it is within the limits of possibility that one or even a few flints may have acquired their peculiar shape from the action of such causes, yet their numbers render it

impossible that this can be a true account of their origin. In a word, they are alleged to bear unmistakable marks of having been manufactured articles, and of having been adapted to certain purposes of savage life; and, further, although the shape of one or even a few may have been given to them by some accident, that there is no known natural force which is capable of imparting to flints in large numbers these peculiar forms.

What, then, is the inference which has been deduced from these facts? That they are not natural productions, but that intelligence of some kind must have presided over their manufacture; and consequently that intelligent beings of a low order must have existed on this globe at a period indefinitely remote. These beings, although they have left behind them no other record of their existence, are assumed to have been men; and because these implements are extremely rude, men in a very low state of intellectual development.

The bearing of this course of reasoning, the validity of which is fully admitted by anti-Theists, and which has been urged again and again as invalidating the Biblical account of the origin of man, on our present argument is obvious. If the existence of these rude flint instruments proves that an intelligence of some kind presided over their formation at a period indefinitely remote, how is it possible to affirm that the same line of reasoning

is not equally valid to prove that an intelligence adequate to their production must have presided over the formation of these innumerable adaptations —adaptations not rude like these flint implements, but highly complicated, and exquisitely finished— which meet us at every turn, and with which the universe everywhere abounds? Surely, if rude implements prove that intellect, though in a low stage of development, must have existed at a period long prior to the birth of history, the innumerable adaptations of the universe must prove that a being possessed of power and intelligence adequate to their production must have presided over their formation, and existed prior to it. To affirm that unintelligent forces could not have shaped the flints, but that they have shaped the adaptations, contradicts every principle of sound reasoning.

Let us now pursue this course of reasoning as it has been applied to a later period. After an interval of indefinite duration—it is impossible to say how long—comes what is called the Neolithic, or more recent, stone age. Here, again, we have no direct evidence of the existence of man; that he did exist is an inference from its remains. The implements of this age exhibit more perfect adaptations, a higher finish, and a more artistic skill, than those of the previous one. Hence the inference has been drawn—and justly drawn—that it is impossible that they have owed their shape to

the action of a number of blind forces, but that they must have been the work of a higher order of intelligence than that possessed by the men of the first stone age; and that during the interval between these two ages, mankind had made a considerable advance in civilization. The same inference follows from the inspection of the remains of the lake dwellings which exist in different parts of Europe, and so on as we ascend higher and higher, until we arrive at our present advanced state of civilization. Surely if arguments such as these are valid to prove the existence of men possessed of different degrees of intelligence at these early periods, though they have left no other memorials of their existence, the adaptations and correlations with which the universe abounds, afford a proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator which is indefinitely stronger.

Let us now assume for the purpose of further illustrating the strength of this argument, that all historical evidence of the existence of man during the ages of the past has perished at some distant period of the future, while not a few of his works are preserved. These would afford marks of very complicated adaptations, from which the men then existing would justly infer that mankind had existed throughout these earlier periods, and that they had passed through a succession of developments, gradually advancing from lower to higher degrees of civilization. How, I ask, is it possible that the

above arguments can be valid to prove the existence of man in a very low stage of intellectual development, but gradually higher and higher at periods indefinitely remote; yet that the innumerable, complicated, and perfect adjustments of the universe should not be valid to prove the existence of a being possessed of a power and intelligence adequate to their production? If unintelligent forces cannot have produced the one, surely it is incredible that they have produced the other.

Once more: let us assume that a traveller penetrates into some uninhabited region of the globe, and there finds in a building a piece of machinery equally complicated as those which exist in our great manufactories. The question will at once present itself to him, How got it there? Let us also suppose that some one suggested to him that its existence had resulted from the action and interaction of the blind forces of Nature during the ages of the past; and that the idea that a high form of intelligence must have presided over its formation is a delusion. Surely the most determined sceptic would reject such a suggestion wirh scorn. This assumption is not wholly an imaginary one. Certain monuments exist in America, which are known not to have been the work of the races existing there at the time of its discovery by Europeans. These are inferred, and inferred justly, to have been the work of some prior race of men in a certain stage of

civilization. Yet the only evidence of their existence is the monuments in question, the race itself having utterly perished, without leaving any other trace of its existence behind. Why, then, is the argument from adaptation only invalid, when it is urged by Theists as affording proof of the existence of a God ?

On the nature of the evidence afforded by the correlations with which the universe abounds, only a few brief remarks will be necessary, for what has been said above respecting the inference which the contemplation of a number of adaptations suggests to people of ordinary intelligence, applies with an intensified force to a number of correlations. The correlations with which the universe abounds consist of two kinds.

First : Those which arise from the meeting together, at the right time and place, of a number of forces wholly independent of one another, by the concurrence of which a particular result is produced ; and apart from which concurrence this result would never have come into existence.

Second : When a number of adaptations are so mutually related to one another, that they form a complicated whole ; and, by their combined action, produce a result which could only be effected by their combined action in harmonious unison each with the other and with the whole.

Respecting the nature and the force of the proof

which is furnished by these correlations to the existence of an intelligent Creator, I shall have more to say in a subsequent chapter.

When we consider the importance of this line of reasoning in its bearing on the Theistic controversy, especially on that very numerous class who have neither time nor opportunity to devote themselves to special studies, we need not wonder that anti-Theists have done their utmost to prove that it is destitute of validity. I must, therefore, offer a few brief observations on the alternative theories which have been propounded by them. Before doing so, however, let me ask the reader carefully to bear in mind, that one point is incontestable, namely, either that the order, adaptations, and correlations of the universe must have owed their origin to a being possessed of a power and intelligence adequate to have produced them; or else to a number of forces destitute of volition and intelligence. Other alternative there is none.

I am aware that for the purpose of avoiding the difficulty of building the universe by forces of this description, it has been suggested that the ultimate particles of matter may possess in themselves some principle of intelligence, say, one side intelligent, and the other not.* But of this there is not only not one atom of proof, but it involves those who propound

* This theory has been actually propounded.

it in a number of hopeless contradictions. It will, therefore, be unnecessary to discuss it. Who, I ask, will believe, that an intelligence is latent in the particles of matter which compose the table on which I am writing, or that intelligence could be produced out of it, by a different arrangement of its particles ?

An objection has been urged against the validity of the argument from adaptation on the ground that it is founded on a mere analogy derived from the action of human intelligence ; and that however just the reasoning may be when applied to the latter, it is totally inapplicable when applied to a being of infinite power and wisdom, who not only fashions the materials with which he acts, but also creates them. This means that he might have so created them, as to have avoided the necessity of employing adjustments, adaptations, and correlations to effect his purposes ; or in other words that he has created difficulties for the purpose of overcoming them. Into the discussion of subtleties of this kind I shall not enter, but I shall content myself with observing that even if the objection were never so true it by no means disposes of the fact, that these adjustments, adaptations, and correlations actually exist, and that their existence is a proof that a being must have existed who possessed a power and intelligence adequate to their formation.

Another objection is, that the argument from

adaptation represents God as acting from without, fashioning a set of materials after the manner of a human artificer. Those who have urged this objection have not scrupled to apply to this argument the coarse term of "The Carpenter Theory of the Universe."

To this objection, I reply, that as far as an adaptation is concerned, it is a matter of indifference in what manner the Creator has acted in its production. It is no business of the Theist to define the mode of His activity. In fashioning the universe, for anything we know to the contrary, He may have acted as a force imminent in it, directing all its movements from within, or external to it, or both; whichever of these alternatives we adopt—let it never be forgotten that we are totally ignorant of the mode of the Divine activity in creation—the adaptations of the universe in their countless numbers remain as facts, the existence of which is beyond the power of dispute; and it is upon them as facts, and not on the manner in which they have been produced, that the argument is founded; and from them, despite of this objection, those who are not bound by the exigences of a particular theory, will continue to infer that they afford unquestionable evidence of the existence of an intelligent Creator; and that the theory which affirms that they have resulted from the interaction of a number of blind forces during the ages of the past is simply incredible. Another

objection which has been urged, that the employment of adjustments and adaptations to effectuate particular results, instead of bringing them into existence by the energy of His will, implies a limitation of the Creator's power, may safely be left to the judgment of the reader.

As I have said above, the only alternative to the theistic argument that these adaptations and correlations afford unquestionable proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator, is the theory which affirms that they have resulted from the interaction during the ages of the past of a multitude of forces destitute of intelligence and voluntary agency. This theory assumes the eternal existence of particles of matter, which have inherent in them certain potentialities, infinite in number, indefinitely minute, self-existent, and which have been in a state of perpetual motion, in obedience to certain necessary forces, during the eternity of the past. It is further assumed that these atoms during this past eternity must have passed through every possible form of combination, the last of which has produced this universe with all its innumerable adaptations and correlations; or in other words, that it has been built up by the combined action of matter, force, and motion, all alike destitute of intelligence. This is the anti-theistic theory of its origin stated in all its nakedness, for into it every theory, except that which traces its origin to the power and wisdom of an intelligent Creator

must ultimately resolve itself. The simple statement of such a theory is perhaps its best refutation.

A few questions, however, may be put with advantage to those who think this account of the origin of the universe a possible one. Is the eternal existence of an infinite number of atoms indefinitely minute one whit more conceivable than that of the eternal existence of an intelligent Creator? Whence came their inherent potentialities? Whence their motion? Why were they not always at a standstill? How do we know that during the past eternity they must have passed through every possible form of combination? May they not have repeated the same combinations over again times without number? These and a number of similar questions may be asked, to which the anti-Theist can make no rational reply. Whatever difficulties he may consider to exist in the conception of a self-existent Creator, he will find that those which are inherent in his own system are out of all proportion greater.

In concluding this portion of my subject, I must ask the reader to refer to, and carefully to ponder over, the observations made in a previous chapter respecting what science tells us is the ultimate destiny of the present universe; and which must have been the destiny during the ages of the past of any previously existing one, unless a being had existed external to the motionless mass of matter into which they had become resolved, who was capable of

imparting to it fresh energy and life; for unless such a being had existed, instead of our present universe, full of its varied activities, unbroken silence and lifelessness must have been the result for evermore.

The favourite theory behind which anti-Theism entrenches itself is the theory of evolution. This theory has obtained during recent years an acceptance among no small number of scientists of great reputation as affording a rational account of the origin of the universe with all its innumerable adjustments without the intervention of an intelligent Creator. Many of these have loudly proclaimed their belief that the investigations of modern science have sapped the foundation of what has long been regarded as the stronghold of the belief in Christian Theism; and no small number of others, who have never troubled themselves to test the validity of the reasonings on which this theory is based, have been induced to accept it by the sheer weight of authority. This being so, its importance renders it necessary that I should consider its claims to our acceptance in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ANTI-THEISTIC THEORY OF EVOLUTION CONSIDERED AND REFUTED.

IT is not every theory of evolution which is anti-theistic. Theories of evolution assume three forms—

1. One which is consistent with a belief in Christian Theism.

2. One which is consistent with a belief in a philosophic Theism; but which affords little satisfaction to the requirements of our spiritual and moral nature.

3. One which is incompatible with the belief in the existence of an intelligent Creator; which affirms that the universe with all its innumerable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations has been produced by the action of blind forces, without the intervention of any being who has an existence independent of it. It is the last of these theories to which I wish to direct the reader's special attention in this chapter.

The popularly accepted theistic theory of the past laid down that each separate species of vegetables

and animals was brought into existence by a special and separate act of creative power. The discoveries of modern science have shown that the number of existing species is so inconceivably vast as to render it improbable that this can have been the mode in which the Creator has acted in His creative work. That it involves a difficulty is certain, which is obviated by the Christian theory of evolution. This theory is fully consistent with the discoveries of modern science; and lays down that the Creator, by His unceasing energy in a manner unknown to us, has evolved all existing species out of previously existing ones in a gradually ascending scale, beginning from lower to higher forms of being. Both theories alike ascribe the creation and the upholding of all things to His energetic working and the operation of His will. They differ from one another as to the mode in which the Creator has acted in His creative work. The one assumes that His energy has been exerted from without and the other from within matter and its forces, guiding and directing them; and at times introducing into the universe some new element of life.

It is to be regretted that a few eager controversialists have denounced the belief in the principle of evolution, in every one of its forms, as inconsistent with a belief in Christian Theism, because, in their opinion, it is inconsistent with certain statements of the Old Testament. In doing so, they have adopted

a course which is pre-eminently unwise, because it is obvious, that it is not the object of the Bible to teach the *modus operandi* of the Creator; and it is certain that the mode in which men are brought into existence is not by the direct creation of each individual, but by a process of evolution. It is also beyond dispute that science has proved that the order in which things have come into existence has been a gradual advancement from lower to higher forms of being. As it is foreign to the purpose of the present work to enter on this controversy, I shall only observe that one thing is certain: that we have no means of knowing on *a priori* grounds, what is the mode in which the Creator has acted in His creative work, and in His present action in providence. These are secrets into which it transcends the powers of our finite intellects to penetrate. It is, therefore, quite as probable that He has produced one species out of a pre-existing one, and so on in an ever ascending series, by a constant and gradual exertion of His power acting from within, as by a number of what are called special and separate acts of creation. This being so, and our ignorance of how creation has been effected being profound, it is absurd to dogmatize on the mode in which the Creator must have acted. All that Christian Theism requires us to believe is, that the universe is the work of a Being who is all-powerful, all-wise, holy, just, merciful, and good; and that He is ever present in His creative work, upholding it in

existence by His ceaseless energy, and guiding it by His Providence. But the mode in which He energizes can be known only to Himself; yet our ignorance of it is no disproof of the reality of the fact.

The second form of this theory assumes the existence of an intelligent Creator, who, at some period of the past, brought into existence one or more cells possessed of life, endowed them with the power of incorporating various substances into themselves, and then of evolving out of themselves all the varieties of animal life which have existed in the past or which exist in the present, without any further intervention on his part. This theory, be it observed, makes no attempt to account for the origin of things, or how the world was brought into existence amply provided with everything needful for the support of the innumerable orders of beings which were destined to inhabit it. All these things it is content to leave unsolved. As I have said, it takes up the work of evolution with the first introduction of life, and having provided itself with one or more living cells, endowed with certain properties, the formation of which it ascribes to an all-powerful and all-wise Creator, it proceeds to evolve all the living beings which have existed in the past, or which exist in the present, by a kind of self-acting machinery, which goes on working out his purposes without any further intervention on his part. To effect this marvellous result, it is alleged that he endowed

these cells with a power of producing beings similar to themselves; but inasmuch as, if this had been their only power, universal sameness must have been the result, he bestowed on them the additional power of imparting to their progeny a number of variations from their parental form, indefinitely small, and so on in perpetual succession. Having effected thus much he retired from his creative work, and left it to the blind forces of the universe to grind out his ultimate purposes without any further intervention or providential guidance. In this way, according to this theory, through the instrumentality of innumerable variations, struggles for existence, survivals of the fittest (that is, the strongest), the power of transmitting improvements to successive generations, etc., have emerged the present vegetable and animal kingdoms, with all their innumerable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations.

Let it be observed that throughout all these latter stages this theory of evolution adopts the same machinery as the anti-theistic one. I shall, therefore, discuss the difficulties which are involved in it when I consider the latter. It is right, however, that I should observe, that not a few of those who hold this theory in its main outlines, admit that there are certain gaps in this long succession which it is impossible to bridge over; and which involve the necessity of special interventions of the Creator at certain stages of the evolution process. Of these the

principal are: the introduction of intelligence, free agency, a moral nature, and those various powers which distinguish man from the animal races; and lastly, on the part of those who believe in Christianity as a Divine revelation, that special interposition of God, which introduced it into the world.

I by no means wish to deny that this theory is consistent with a belief in Theism, and that it satisfies a demand of our intellects which anti-Theism does not. Thus, it starts with the assumption that the introduction of the original germs of life into a universe previously destitute of life, must have been the work of an all-powerful and intelligent Creator. It affirms, and affirms truly, that the creation of the original cells, endowed with the potency of evolving out of themselves every form of living being which has existed in the past, and which exists in the present, with all their innumerable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations, is a proof that the being who could effect this must have been possessed of inconceivable power and intelligence. This is indubitable; but, however much a theory of this kind may satisfy some of the requirements of philosophic thought, a God who, after creating these cells and endowing them with their various properties, has retired from all interference with them except on a few special occasions; and has left them by the aid of the unintelligent forces of the universe to grind out a number of foreseen results, just as a machine

when once set in motion, grinds out the results for the production of which it was constructed, and then stands by calmly contemplating its action, unmoved by any consequences with which it may be attended, can satisfy neither the spiritual nor the moral requirements of man. The intellect may be satisfied with a God who is very far off; but man's spiritual and moral nature sighs after one who is also very near at hand, for one with whom he can hold communion, who reveals Himself, and who can hear and answer prayer. It is difficult to comprehend how the God of this system of philosophy can become the subject of either love, trust, or hope. Epicurus, himself, did not deny the existence of gods; but he took care to relegate them to a region of peaceful enjoyment, undisturbed by the cares and troubles of the providential government of the world. The god of this system of philosophy bears a far closer resemblance to one of the gods of Epicurus than to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation. Its God may satisfy an intellectual need, which anti-Theism cannot, but he is too remote to satisfy the aspirations of the heart.

Let us now consider that form of the theory of evolution which is inconsistent with a belief in the existence of an intelligent Creator. Although it has been propounded by several men of eminence, with a considerable variety in its details, yet inasmuch as

these details are based on principles which are substantially the same, it will be unnecessary to discuss them separately. I shall, therefore, simply address myself to the consideration of the principles themselves.

All anti-theistic theories are obliged to assume an existence of some kind as a foundation on which it is possible to commence the operation of world-building, because there is one certitude which is accepted alike by Theists and anti-Theists, namely, that out of nothing nothing can originate. From this it follows that if something now exists, something must have existed always; otherwise nothingness must have produced existence—which is absurd. The propounders of these theories are, therefore, compelled to assume the existence of space; of an innumerable multitude of atoms inconceivably minute, possessed of an inherent power of motion, and an existence designated force,* which enabled these atoms to congregate into masses, and gave rise to the principle of gravitation. These assumptions are rendered necessary, because, without atoms it would be impossible to build a universe; without space motion would be inconceivable; without motion the atoms would have been eternally

* The opinion which is now widely accepted respecting force is that it is unalterable in amount, neither increasing nor diminishing; and that the only change which it undergoes is the transformation of one kind of force into another, its equivalent in amount.

quiescent; and without some kind of force operating either upon them or within them, they would have been incapable of congregating in masses, and thereby of forming worlds. It is also necessary to assume that these things were self-existent, *i.e.* that they existed without a beginning during the eternity of the past; for otherwise they must have been brought into existence by a self-existent Creator whose existence it is the object of this theory to disprove. All these are very convenient assumptions, for without them the anti-theistic theory could not advance a step; but to attribute to a succession of atoms, to motion, and to force an existence which never had a beginning involves difficulties out of all proportion greater than the assumption of the existence of a self-existing being, who possessed a power and intelligence adequate to create this universe with all its innumerable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations. The assumption that these atoms must have passed through every possible form of combination during the eternity of the past, of which the hap-hazard production of this ordered universe is the last, may be safely left to the judgment of the reader.

The anti-theistic theory having thus provided itself with the materials necessary for commencing operations, let us now consider the mode in which, according to it, the present universe has been built up out of these atoms without the intervention

of intelligence. The process briefly stated is as follows—

After various interactions of matter, force, and motion during ages of indeterminate duration, these atoms got resolved into a fiery vapour-cloud, intensely hot, filling the space now occupied by the solar system. I say "the solar system" because, with a view to our present argument, it is unnecessary to go beyond it and inquire how the millions of suns, which astronomers tell us are scattered throughout space, came into existence. It will be sufficient to inquire how this theory gives a rational account of the origin of the world in which we live, and of all which it contains.

If it be asked: "Whence came the heat of this fiery vapour-cloud?" the anti-Theist will reply, "Heat and motion are only two forms of the same force; and when motion is arrested heat is generated." It is only necessary, therefore, to assume that the motion of these atoms should get diminished (how, we are not told), and heat will be generated in sufficient quantities. What, then, is the next step? A cooling process in course of time is assumed to have set in, and the heat of the vapour-cloud to have been gradually dissipated into space. Hereupon it contracted, and when it had sufficiently cooled, a portion of the atoms met together in masses, forming a nucleus; and the primeval force inherent in them, which, as we have said, admits of various transformations, assumed the form

of what we call the force of gravitation, and the mass of congregated atoms assumed a circular motion. Then the remaining portions of the vapour-cloud got gradually thrown off from the original mass, and by several other processes after the lapse of ages got consolidated into worlds of which our earth is one. All this, and much more, we are asked to believe has taken place during the ages of the past, from the interaction and hap-hazard meeting of forces destitute of intelligence. If it be objected that these processes require intervals of time inconceivably vast for their accomplishment, the anti-Theist will reply, "I never need trouble myself about time; I have eternity to fall back on, which is inexhaustible. What cannot be accomplished in a million years can be accomplished in a hundred million; and that admits of being multiplied to any conceivable extent. So the necessary time will be always forthcoming. Time, therefore, forms no difficulty with me."

Still the work is very incomplete, for the world thus formed was a simple desolation; and until it had passed through a further process of cooling, its heat was so intense that no form of vegetable or animal life was capable of existing in it, though it was well stored with everything which enters into the composition of its solid nucleus, necessary for their support.

Yet these unintelligent forces, unprescient of the

future, proceeded with their work, and after long intervals of time, succeeded in so framing and fashioning the world as to have made it a place fit for the habitation of beings possessed of life, and furnished with all the materials requisite for their development and growth ; nay, even in making it a fit habitation for beings endowed with a high order of intelligence ; in a word, without the smallest foresight they succeeded in forming a world, which, in the course of distant ages, would be not only a suitable habitation for man, but one capable of supplying his various wants, as he advanced from one stage of civilization to another. If it is asked what is involved in these operations, the answer must be that forces devoid of intelligence are capable of producing results, which beings possessed of the highest order of intelligence might full well envy.

But all that has been thus far effected is to have produced a world devoid of life, yet fitted to be the habitation of life and intelligence. Here, then, we have arrived at a gap in the anti-theistic theory of evolution so wide that none of its advocates have been able to throw a bridge over it except by the aid of their imagination. Let it be observed that the only materials, which they have to work with, are lifeless matter, force, and motion. But life exists. Whence, then, came it ? No experiment known to science has been able to evolve matter which is living out of matter which is not living. Pressed by

this difficulty, some anti-Theists have affirmed that life is a mode of motion, combined with a suitable arrangement of the particles of matter. But the difference between things possessed of life, and things not possessed of life, is one which is palpable to the most ordinary understanding. Nothing will persuade such a person, that a change in the position of the atoms which compose the table on which I am writing, or any motion imparted to them, will enable it to present the phenomena of life. Pressed by this difficulty of producing life by such means, most anti-Theists have adopted a theory called "spontaneous generation," *i.e.* that life has in some unknown way during the ages of the past, emerged out of non-life. But here they are pressed by the evidence of facts. Once it was supposed that this was a thing of not unfrequent occurrence; but certain experiments have proved the contrary. Even eminent scientists, who disbelieve in Christian Theism, are compelled to admit that as far as our present knowledge goes, no instance can be produced of the production of life out of matter which is certainly devoid of life. Here, as far as present facts are concerned, the anti-theistic theory hopelessly breaks down. What, then, is to be done? Is the theory to be abandoned? No; recourse is to be had to the principle of faith. They take refuge in the expression of a confident expectation that, although in the present state of our knowledge

not a tittle of evidence can be adduced in support of this theory of spontaneous generation, yet that this evidence will be forthcoming at some period of the future; or that the state of things might have been different in the distant past from what they are in the present. In other words they abandon reason, and fall back on that faith which they denounce in others as credulity.

Let us now suppose, for the sake of argument, that a few living cells have been evolved in the manner which this theory pre-supposes. Let us hear Sir John Lubbock's description of a cell, and then judge whether the theory is believable—

"Every cell in the animal body is a standing miracle. It must grow, it must assimilate nourishment, it must secrete, it must produce other cells like itself, and this after and in addition to its own proper and distinctive function. The lowest animal consists only of a single cell. Yet they feed and digest, they grow and multiply, they move and feel. Their perceptions are no doubt confused, and undifferentiated, and perhaps devoid of consciousness. The soft protoplasm of which they consist is dimly affected by external stimuli, as for instance, by the waves of light and sound. Their forms are all minute, almost invisible to the naked eye" (*The Senses of Animals*, p. 3).

The writer might have full well added one more

wonder connected with these cells. They must either have created themselves, or have been evolved out of matter destitute of life and intelligence by a process which differs only in name from self-creation, if they are not the work of an intelligent Creator.

But let the anti-Theist proceed in his work of world-building; and to enable him to do so, let us assume that a cell has been produced by an act of spontaneous generation. A very serious task awaits him, to fill the world, then a desolation, with these innumerable forms of vegetable and animal life, which have existed during the past, and which exist in the present; for the cell produced by spontaneous generation cannot be assumed to be endowed with the marvellous qualities above described, but to be only a simple cell possessed of life.

Before it is possible to make the smallest progress in the production of additional forms of life, the anti-Theist is compelled to make a very serious demand on our faith. These cells, unless they had been endowed with the power of producing other cells, and that too in considerable numbers, must have utterly failed to people the globe with living forms. Further, if their powers were limited to the production of cells precisely similar to themselves, universal sameness must have been the result, and the endless varieties of life would have failed to

come into existence. It was, therefore, necessary that these primeval cells should have been endowed with the power of generating their like with the addition of a number of small variations from their primitive forms. Unless this had been so, the whole process of anti-theistic evolution would have come to a standstill. Cells endowed with these properties are very convenient for the purposes of this theory; but the questions, how came they into existence, through what process did they become possessed of the power of generating their like, and of doing this with numerous small variations, demand an answer. To these questions the anti-Theist has no answer to give except that they have been worked out through ages of evolution during the eternity of the past. With theorizers of this kind, with eternity at their back, all things are possible, except the existence of a Creator possessed of boundless power and intelligence.

Let us now assume, for the sake of argument, however incredible it justly seems to men of ordinary understanding, that beings such as those above referred to, have been evolved by the action and interaction of a number of forces devoid of life and intelligence, during the ages of the past; that their descendants have evolved a vast variety of small variations, some suited, and some unsuited to their environment; that the latter have perished, while the former have survived; that the survivors

have evolved fresh variations of an improved type, and more capable of adjusting themselves to their surroundings; and that this process has gone on through ages of indefinite duration. These have at last become so numerous, as to have encroached on the means of subsistence. Hence has arisen what, in the language of this theory, has been called "a struggle for life." In this the weaker perished, while the stronger survived, and threw out fresh improvements gradually evolving more and more perfect forms. All this gradual advancement, the position taken by the anti-Theist compels him to assume, has been produced through the action (let this never be forgotten) of forces destitute of intelligence. What, then, must have occurred? One answer only is possible: A countless number of hap-hazard meetings together of these forces *at the right time and place*, must have produced the adjustments capable of producing the results in question. I have already drawn attention to the number of chances against the fall of twelve dice with their aces upwards, when thrown into the air, and the immense multiplication of the improbability, if the operation were repeated twelve times in succession with the same result, an improbability so great, that we arrive at the full conviction that intelligence must have intervened somewhere. But this is a mere shadow compared with the chance production of the adjustments, adaptations, and

correlations which exist in numbers past human comprehension. Their occurrence, therefore, is incredible.

Let us, however, for the sake of argument, assume that all these difficulties have been surmounted; that the blind forces of Nature have prepared a world supplied with everything requisite for the support of vegetable life; and that a few of the lowest forms of organization have been actually evolved. A mighty work yet remains to be accomplished, namely, to fill the world with the various forms of vegetable existence in all their inconceivable variety, and to fit them to the various conditions of soil and climate; for it is an obvious fact that this has been effected somehow. How, then, has this been accomplished? The anti-theistic evolutionist will answer: "By a very gradual evolution of lower forms into higher ones by the aid of a number of small variations, through periods of vast duration, which by repeated struggles for existence, adaptations to their environment, and survival of the fittest, have evolved the present vegetable kingdom, with its endless varieties of form, qualities, adaptations, and correlations." Let the reader glance at it, and ask himself whether it is credible that blind forces incapable of purpose or foresight, can have produced results, such as the highest form of intelligence, short of the infinite, might full well envy. No conceivable array of figures can convey an adequate idea of the number of the requisite hap-hazard interactions of

forces necessary to produce such results. What, then, must have been the numbers in their totality which were requisite for evolving the present vegetable kingdom, with its innumerable varieties? The anti-Theist will doubtless again reply: "I have the bank of eternity at my command; and with sufficient time all the necessary interactions of unintelligent forces at the right time and place are possible." To this it will be a sufficient reply, that many abstract possibilities, of which this is one, are not credible as actual occurrences. Further, astronomy tells us that the time which has elapsed since the world has been capable of sustaining life, is far too short to satisfy the demands of the anti-theistic evolutionist.

Let us again assume, for his benefit, that these difficulties have been overcome; and ask him to address himself to the evolution of the varieties of the animal kingdom, the different species of which, as modern science teaches us, amount to hundreds of thousands, if not of millions. Here, however, before he can take one step in advance he is met by a difficulty which is sufficient to make the most determined evolutionist look grave. In the animal kingdom, which includes man, a number of phenomena make their appearance, of which the preceding forms of existence are destitute, namely, sensation, intelligence, free agency, and a moral nature. Unless these can be generated somehow,

the theory of anti-theistic evolution inevitably breaks down. Let us briefly consider how the evolutionist proceeds to evolve them out of materials which contain no trace of them.

With respect to sensation, he affirms that it is the result of motions in the nervous system, which are conveyed to the brain, and of the arrangement of the particles of matter, of which that organ is composed, which when set in motion by the action of the nerves, produce the phenomenon which we designate "sensation." But of this no evidence has been adduced. What, then, are the facts?

Sensations are invariably preceded by motions in the nervous system, produced by either external or internal forces, which are conveyed to the brain, and terminate in it; but between these motions, and the sensations which invariably follow them, a wide gulf lies, which no amount of scientific observation has been able to bridge over. We have eminent authority for affirming that known science can suggest no means, by which a motion can be translated into a sensation; and that in fact the translation of the one into the other is in the present state of our knowledge inconceivable. This being so, the only resource of the anti-theistic evolutionist is to express his belief that what is not possible now may have been possible in the ages of the past.

But, assuming that this difficulty has been surmounted, he has immediately to encounter a

fresh one—the necessity of evolving intelligence out of materials previously destitute of it. I say "the necessity of evolving it," for it is an obvious fact that it exists, and therefore that it must have come into existence somehow. Equally certain is it that intelligence, and the want of it, are not separated from one another by a few small variations, such as this theory presupposes, but by a great gulf; for even sensation and intelligence differ widely. How, then, is this interval to be bridged over, when the only materials at the command of the evolutionist are matter, force, and motion? Must we once more invoke the theory of spontaneous generation?

This difficulty has been attempted to be surmounted, by the affirmation that thought and intelligence are neither more nor less than a function of the brain; that where there is no intelligence, there is no brain; and that wherever there is brain, however small, there is intelligence however low; and consequently that thought and intelligence are a mere question of organization. I have pointed out in a previous chapter the inadequacy of this theory to account for the facts, and therefore I need not repeat what I have said on that subject here.

Let us now once more assume, for the sake of argument, that these difficulties have been surmounted, and that the lowest form of animal

existence has been brought into being, with all its marvellous endowments as above described.

What, then, is the work which the anti-theistic evolutionist has yet to accomplish? This, and nothing less: to prove that all the forms of animal existence now inhabiting the globe, from the smallest animalcule to the whale, the lion, and the elephant, and even to man with his moral nature have been evolved by a succession of small and gradual improvements out of one of the lowest forms of life by the action of forces destitute of intelligence and volition. This is the problem which he has to solve. How, I ask, is it to be effected?

Here again the answer will be returned, "By the process called 'natural selection,' or the 'survival of the fittest.'" As this theory is a very widespread and popular one, it will be desirable that I should give it a brief consideration. According to it, the small variations above referred to, when of a favourable character, gave to their possessors an advantage in the struggle for life, when the means of subsistence became scarce; whereas those which were destitute of them perished. These advantages became fixed, and were transmitted to their descendants; and thus they produced an improved breed, while the inferior ones became gradually extinct. This process has gone on from generation to generation, until at last has emerged the present animal kingdom with all its countless varieties, adaptations,

and adjustments, including man and his moral nature. Such in very brief outline is the anti-theistic form of this theory. A few comments on it will be necessary.

I observe, first, that the terms used in it are ambiguous, and therefore misleading. The word "selection" in the ordinary use of language, means "choice," and choice implies the presence of intelligence, because without it in the ordinary acceptation of the term, choice is impossible. But in the process designated "natural selection," the forces operating in it are destitute of all power of choosing, and the object of the theory is to construct the various forms of animal and vegetable life without the intervention of intelligence, or of any being who is capable of exercising choice. Again: according to this theory, "the survival of the fittest" really means "the survival of the strongest," for the struggle in question is one for the necessary supply of food, and for space in which to exist, of which the strongest are certain to get the largest share. But it by no means follows that the strongest are in all cases the fittest to survive. Which, I ask, is the fittest to survive: the persecutor or the persecuted, the strong villain or the weak saint, the man devoured by the shark or the shark which devours him? Fitness to survive involves other considerations than that of mere strength. This theory also takes for granted that, in a struggle for existence, the victor always emerges out of it with

undiminished powers. On the contrary, it frequently happens that the victor in a contest for a supply of food, instead of emerging out of it in his full strength, issues from it considerably weakened, especially when the struggle has been a severe one. In such a case he would transmit weakened instead of improved powers to his posterity. Further, the term evolution, as intended to be descriptive of the process by which a simple cell gradually produces the present animal kingdom, is misleading; the fact being that before any of these primeval germs of life, which this theory assumes the existence of, can produce anything out of themselves, no small amount of involution and assimilation must take place, and so throughout the entire process. Exactness of thought requires that the anti-theistic theory of evolution should be designated a theory to account for the existence of the various forms of animal and vegetable life through a process of involution and evolution, by means of forces destitute of intelligence and volition.

The reader will have observed that in the course of this argument I have repeatedly referred to the necessity of the meeting together of a number of distinct and independent forces at *the right time and place*, in order that they may bring about a particular result. The importance of such a concurrence in its bearing on the anti-theistic theory of evolution will be made clear by a very simple

illustration. Let us assume that the unintelligent forces of Nature, through the principle of natural selection, have succeeded in producing a male animal —for example, a horse. It is evident that if they had stopped here, no race of horses could have come into existence. What, then, was the necessary condition of the production of the species? Evidently that the blind forces of Nature, at the time that they produced a male, or shortly afterwards, should have produced a female. But this is not all, for if the male had been evolved in America, and the female in Europe, the species would never have come into existence. To produce a race of horses, it would have been necessary that the male and the female should have been evolved not only at the same time, but in the immediate neighbourhood of one another. Against such a concurrence of unintelligent forces at the right time and place, the chances are so overwhelming as to render it unbelievable. But according to this theory a similar concurrence of forces must have taken place in the case of every existing species of animals now existing on the globe to have rendered their existence possible. Is such a concurrence, I ask, within the limits of rational belief? Yet this is only a single instance out of innumerable others which must have taken place during the ages of the past, without which the anti-theistic theory of evolution must have come to a standstill in its operations.

Further: Three thousand years have now elapsed since the birth of authentic history, and a vastly longer period since that which may be designated by the term "monumental" history. What indications are there of even a tendency on the part of a lower order of beings to evolve out of themselves a higher one during this interval of time? Surely, during a period so long, some signs of movement in a higher direction ought to be visible. But there are none. The bee is just as wise as, and no wiser than, it was three thousand years ago; nor has it learned to regard the annual slaughter of its parent drones a sin. The dog has been man's companion for long centuries, yet he has failed to invent a language, nor is there a trace of his vocal organs undergoing a gradual improvement in the production of articulate speech. The ape, not to speak of numerous other animals, is capable of appreciating the comfort of a fire; but he has never yet learned the art of kindling one, simple as it is. The cat has long been not only the companion, but a favourite, of mankind; yet it has not made the smallest progress in the way of developing even the semblance of a conscience or a moral sense. It is needless to multiply examples, for we all know that the various races of animals, whatever may be their endowments, if left to themselves, are unprogressive; although a few instances exist where they are capable of making a slight advance-

ment under the direct teaching of man. Full well, then, it may be asked, how it has come to pass, if they have been progressive, as according to this theory they must have been to a wonderful extent during the ages of the past, that during the historic period they have come to a stand-still, and have done nothing. But if it be urged, as it has been urged, that the period of time which is covered by authentic and monumental history is too short to produce any visible advancement in a direction upwards, then this period, compared with the vast intervals of time which must have been requisite for effecting the innumerable evolutions which must have taken place in the animal kingdom, not to speak of those in the vegetable kingdom, can be no larger than a single grain of sand compared with the masses which lie on the ocean's shore. But other sciences teach us that far, very far, within this stupendous interval of time, the globe in which we live must have been in such a state of heat as to have rendered it impossible for any living thing, such as an animal or a vegetable, to have existed in it.

In conclusion, I think that it will put in a striking light the difficulties which the anti-theistic evolutionist has to encounter, if I put before the reader, in a succinct form, those which must be overcome in the production of a being such as

man, through agents which are alike devoid of life, intelligence, and a moral nature

First, he has to provide himself with a cell possessed of life; but how one can be produced out of materials devoid of life he fails to explain, except by drafting on his imagination. This cell, when brought into being, as Sir J. Lubbock tells us, must grow, assimilate, and secrete; and, he should have added, be capable of producing other cells similar to itself; for if it did not possess these powers, the entire evolution process would have been stillborn. But it by no means follows that a living cell, evolved out of the only materials which the evolutionist has at his command, should be either capable of growth, of assimilating nourishment, or of generating other cells similar to itself. Here, again, to explain how they became possessed of these powers, the evolutionist has to make a large draft on our imagination—may I not rather say, on our credulity? If a cell must grow, it must be capable of assimilating nourishment from some source external to itself; and if it must assimilate nourishment, nourishment must have been all ready at its hand suitable for it to assimilate. How, then, by whom, or by what, has this suitable nourishment been provided? Again, it by no means follows that a living cell should be possessed of a power of generating numerous other cells similar to itself. That cells should have been

possessed of this power, is very convenient for the evolutionist; but the only way in which he can account for the production of a thing which Sir J. Lubbock designates "a standing miracle," is by making a further draft on our imagination. But here a very serious obstacle blocks the way. If these cells only possessed the power of generating others precisely similar to themselves, universal sameness must have been the result. To prevent this, it is necessary to assume that they possessed this power united with that of producing a number of small variations from their primeval type. How they succeeded in acquiring this singular power, we are not informed, but it is absolutely necessary to assume its existence, if the evolution theory we are considering is to get into working order. An eminent professor, however, has attempted to get rid of all difficulties at once by informing us that his power of vision enables him to see in matter the potency of all living things. Still, it is not unreasonable to demand that each difficulty should be met by itself, because it is evident that if this and the other above-mentioned difficulties cannot be overcome, it is impossible to evolve out of one or more living cells, even if you have succeeded in getting life out of non-life, the innumerable varieties of the animal kingdom.

But we cannot stop here. Assuming that the anti-Theist has provided himself with the necessary

cells wherewith to commence operations, how is he to produce the endless variety of organized beings which at present fill the earth? His answer will doubtless be, by these cells throwing out a number of variations which were improvements on their original forms, which gave them the advantage in their struggle for existence; that those improvements became fixed, and were transmitted to their descendants; and so on, from generation to generation, until at last they succeeded in evolving the lowest form of organized life. Here, however, he has to encounter a serious difficulty. It is very convenient for his theory that these cells should have been possessed of the power of transmitting such variations as were improvements to their descendants, and so on for ever in perpetual succession; and that the varieties which were not improvements should have become extinct; but in this long course of improvement, the hap-hazard concurrences of the various things necessary for carrying the entire process into effect at the right time and place, without which it would have been impossible that these advances in an upward direction could have been effected, must have been so inconceivably numerous as to make the theory utterly incredible.

But his difficulties increase in proportion as the evolutionist advances. Out of such materials He has now to fill the world with every form of organized being which now exists in it. His only

machinery for doing so is that which I have repeatedly referred to in the course of this chapter. The numbers of such beings are inconceivably vast, and in them exist a number of adjustments, adaptations, and correlations, whereby each organ is fitted to its function; part to part, and each part to the whole. The number of these which exist in animal bodies exceeds the power of human calculation. How, then, have they been formed, according to the anti-theistic theory of evolution? Here again, the answer must be by the action and the interaction on matter of a number of unintelligent forces meeting together at the right time and place. But against such a concurrence the chances are enormous even in the case of a single organ. But animal bodies contain a multitude of organs, not a few of which are of a highly complicated character. To express the chances against such a concurrence, the number of organisms which exist in the animal kingdom will have to be multiplied by the number of the adjustments, adaptations, and correlations which they contain; and the result by the number of the parts of which they are composed. The array of figures thus produced would be incapable of being embraced by the human mind. This would denote the impossibility of the results, which the anti-theistic evolutionist endeavours to persuade us can be produced by the hap-hazard concurrence of atoms and forces destitute of intelligence and volition.

But I must hasten onwards to man. How is He to be evolved in conformity with the anti-theistic theory of evolution? Here the difficulties thicken so as to make not a few of the holders of this theory look grave. I will briefly enumerate the chief of them. Sensation has to be evolved out of materials which were utterly incapable in their original form of experiencing a sensation; intelligence out of that which was destitute of intelligence; the free agency which each of us is conscious of possessing out of that which is incapable of exercising an act of choice; conscience, the sense of right and wrong, the feeling that it is our duty to choose the one and to avoid the other, and the sense of approbation and disapprobation, out of things which neither do nor can understand either of these distinctions: and mercy, holiness, compassion, justice, and benevolence, out of blind forces, which remorselessly crush everything which crosses their path.

It would be easy to adduce numerous other difficulties, but these will suffice. I will not aggravate the position of the anti-theistic evolutionist, or waste the reader's time by dwelling on them in detail. I shall, therefore, only observe that it is certain that before one thing can be evolved out of another it must first exist in some form or shape in that thing out of which it is evolved; but in blind matter and force, these things exist not. How, then, was it possible that they should have evolved out of them-

selves that which was never in them? We can persuade a man; we can terrify an animal; but a steam engine we can neither persuade nor terrify. We may entreat it, but it cannot hear; we may command it, but it will not obey. Wide, therefore, is the gulf which separates the world of free agency from the world of necessary agency. A body of alchymists, wholly different from any which has existed during the past, must arise before the one can be transmuted into the other.

One observation more before I conclude this chapter: The difficulties of Theism sink into comparative nothingness compared with those with which the theory of anti-theistic evolution is attended. Those who accept this theory in order that they may avoid those with which a belief in Christian Theism is attended, bear a close resemblance to those who of old strained out a gnat, and swallowed a camel.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COURSE OF REASONING ADOPTED IN THE TWO PREVIOUS CHAPTERS ILLUSTRATED BY EXAMPLES.

TO do this in a satisfactory manner is a work of no little difficulty. This arises not from the paucity, but from the richness, of the materials at our command; for adjustments, adaptations, and correlations abound everywhere in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and meet us at every turn. Of these some are simple, others extremely complicated. The reader's attention cannot be too strongly called to the fact that it is not single instances of such adaptations, but their existence in numbers numberless, which imparts to the argument its overwhelming force. To exhibit its full force in a brief work like the present is obviously impossible, for it would involve a description of the most important adjustments and adaptations in the animal and vegetable kingdoms—and of the manner in which they are correlated to one another, and to the external universe. On the other hand, by adducing only a few examples, there

is no little danger of failing to impress the reader with a sense of the force of the argument taken as a whole. Happily, however, their existence is not denied even by the most determined unbelievers. The reader will, therefore, only have to multiply the examples which I shall adduce by hundreds of thousands of millions to enable him for all practical purposes to estimate the force of the argument which they furnish in proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator.

In considering this subject, it cannot be too constantly kept in mind that the only question in the present state of the Theistic controversy is, not the existence of these adjustments, adaptations, and correlations, but whether they have owed their origin to the interaction during the ages of the past of a number of blind forces destitute of volition and intelligence; or do they prove as the Theist contends, with a force equal to that of a demonstration, that their existence must be due to the energy of a being possessed of a power and intelligence adequate to have brought them into existence? It will be, therefore, desirable that I should not only exhibit the argument in the general form in which it is set forth in the two previous chapters, but also to enable the reader better to appreciate its force, that I should adduce a few illustrations of it, asking him at the same time to keep steadily in mind what, as I have observed above, unbelievers

in the being of a God do not deny; that these adaptations and correlations exist in the universe in numbers passing human comprehension. In doing this I shall draw my illustrations from things with which most of us are in some degree acquainted. Some of them may seem well worn, but they are clear and obvious, and quite as convincing as the most elaborate discoveries of modern science. The truth is, that God has not left Himself without witness, even to those who know no more of the structure of the universe, than the uncultivated men whom St. Paul addressed at Lystra. All that modern discoveries have done is greatly to enlarge our knowledge, and thereby to furnish a vast mass of additional evidence from every quarter, indefinitely strengthening an argument which in its most simple form commends itself to persons of ordinary understanding.

I shall draw my illustrations from our bodily framework, for not only is it full of adjustments and adaptations, some of which are extremely complicated, by means of which the various results which are necessary for our health, and even for our life, are effectuated, but these adaptations are so correlated together, that they form a complicated whole, each part being adjusted to every other part, and to the body as a whole.

The idea which I desire to convey, cannot be better expressed than in the language of St. Paul

slightly accommodated to the present argument, in which form even an anti-Theist cannot object to it, as a true statement of facts, whatever theory he may propound respecting their origin.

The parts of the body are so tempered together, "that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honoured" (that is, adequate to perform its function) all the members rejoice with it. The well-known fable of the envy of the members against the belly, their conspiracy to starve it, and the results which followed the attempt also forms another admirable illustration of this important truth.

This correlation of the different parts of the body to one another, and to the body as a whole, is a thing which comes under our daily experience. Let sickness intervene, and we immediately become sensible that if one member suffer, the whole body suffers with it; and as soon as the mischief wrought by the diseased member ceases, and it is enabled to perform its proper function all the other members obtain relief. The following illustrations, will be amply sufficient to prove that the innumerable adaptations in our bodily framework, and its correlations by which its parts are so adjusted together as to form a complicated whole, cannot have been the result of the interaction of forces destitute of

intelligence, and incapable of forming a purpose; but on the contrary they prove with irresistible force that their existence must be due to the action of a being, to whose power and wisdom it is impossible to assign limitations. I will consider

The instrumentalities by which sound, articulate, speech, language, and hearing are produced.

1.—*The Ear.*

I will quote Sir J. Lubbock's description of it in his recently published work, entitled, *The Senses of Animals* (p. 77). Anti-Theists will scarcely object that I am adducing the testimony of a partial witness.

"We have first the internal ear, which is much less important in man than in many of the other animals, like the horse, where it may be seen moving continually, and almost automatically, assuming a form most suitable for carrying the waves of sound down the outer passage to the tympanum, or drum. This is a membrane stretched between the outer ear on the one hand and the drum on the other, which also contains air transmitted through the mouth by means of the Eustachian tube. The drum is separated from the brain by a hard bony partition, in which are two orifices, the one oval and the other round. Across the drum stretches a chain of little bones—first the hammer, secondly the anvil,

and thirdly the stirrup. The flat plate of the stirrup lies against the orifice (or, as it is technically called, *fenestra ovalis*) of the drum. Thus the sounds are intensified by being conveyed from the tympanic membrane to one which is twenty times smaller. Behind the *fenestra ovalis* is the labyrinth, which is filled with fluid, and on which the final filaments of the auditory nerve are distributed. This fluid is thrown into vibrations by those of the stirrup; but as it is enclosed in a bony case the vibrations would be greatly curtailed if it were not for the second membrane; or *fenestra rotunda*. This second membrane, therefore, acts as a counter-opening, for if the fluid is compressed in one place, it must claim more room in another. The labyrinth also consists of two parts; the cochlea, and the semicircular canals. The semicircular canals are three in number, and stand at right angles to one another. No satisfactory explanation of their function has yet been given; but there is some evidence that, in addition to and apart from hearing, they are affected by the position of the head, and thus serve as organs for maintaining the equilibrium of the body. Each of the canals commences with an oval dilatation, or ampulla. In the ampulla is a projecting ridge, on which are strong, stiff, delicate, hairlike processes, the vibrations of which probably gives certain sound sensations. In the canals certain parts have shorter hairs, over which are minute ear-stones, or otoliths,

consisting of carbonate of lime, embedded in a gelatinous substance. The cochlea contains, moreover, a complicated and wonderful organ discovered by Count Corte. This appears to be, in fact, a microscopic musical instrument, composed of some four thousand complex arches, increasing regularly in length and diminishing in height, from the base to the summit of the cochlea. The waves of sound have been supposed to play on this instrument almost like the fingers of a performer on the strings of a musical instrument. The fibres of Corte, according to Helmholtz, may be distributed among the seven octaves which are in general use, so that there will be thirty-three and a third fibres to every semitone, and four hundred to each octave. Weber has estimated that a skilful ear can perceive a difference even of one sixty-fourth of a tone, or nearly four thousand seconds, and this would agree fairly well with the number of fibres."

Thus complicated is this organ. If the reader will count, he will find that it consists of at least thirty different parts besides the four thousand complex arches, so correlated to each other that, by their conjoint action, they produce a definite result, which result would fail of being produced if any one of the parts were wanting. They are even more numerous, but as their numbers are not given by the author, it is impossible to count them. Some

of them are very elaborate, as the drum, the hammer, anvil, stirrup, the labyrinth, and the Eustachian tube, which connects the ear with the mouth, thereby furnishing the drum with the needful air, and above all, the four thousand complex arches, forming a microscopic musical instrument.

Yet, notwithstanding all this elaborate machinery, every part of which is adjusted and correlated to every other part, no sound has yet been produced, no, not even a motion ; only an organ possessed of life, one portion of which is capable of receiving and being affected by a number of motions, which are not only extremely numerous, but of the most varied character ; and the other, endowed with the capacity of transmitting those motions to the auric nerve.

Here let it be carefully observed, before the organism of the ear can produce a single sound that three other conditions are necessary—

(i) An instrumentality capable of originating motions.

(ii) A medium capable of transmitting the motions thus produced to the ear.

(iii) A power which, when the motions thus produced are transmitted to the brain, is capable of translating them into sensations, and thus producing what we designate sounds ; and in the case of man, with whom alone we are at present concerned, articulate speech.

How, then, is all this accomplished? To effect it, the vocal organs and the ear require not only to be exactly correlated to each other, but both to a substance quite independent of the human body and its organism, namely, the atmosphere. Apart from this correlation, no communication between the vocal organs and the ear would be possible, and the existence of both would be without result. Yet even when this communication has been established, we get nothing but a mass of complicated motions transmitted to the brain. To produce hearing, speech, and language, something capable of translating these motions into sensations and thoughts is necessary. How this last operation is effected, science is compelled to confess its ignorance. One thing, however, is certain. Motions are neither sounds, sensations, nor thoughts; but only the media through which they are produced. An intelligent mind is the only thing which is capable of affecting this translation; but how it does so, we know not.

The adjustments, adaptations, and correlations involved in these latter processes, are not only extremely numerous, but of a highly complicated character. To make this clear it will be necessary that I should give to the vocal organs which produce the requisite motions, and to the medium through which they are transmitted to the ear, a brief consideration.

2.—*The Vocal Organs.*

It will be unnecessary that I should give an equally minute description of the vocal organs as that which has been given in Sir J. Lubbock's description of the ear. They are, however, of a very complex character. The degree of their complexity may be appreciated from the fact that, for the production of that endless variety of motions which are necessary for the production of sounds, a corresponding change must take place in the action of the innumerable muscles connected with the lungs, where these motions are originated, the vocal chords, the larynx, the tongue, and the mouth, by means of which they are modified in such a manner as to produce the endless variety of sound, rhythm, tune, pitch, and harmony as is produced in a concert. Let it be carefully observed, that not a single change takes place in the human voice, not even in the production of a consonant or a vowel sound, without a corresponding motion taking place in some part of the vocal organs—which changes are produced by the action of muscles specially adapted for that purpose; thereby producing corresponding motions in the air, which forms the only medium of communication between the mouth and the ear. Consequently it was necessary that the vast number of parts which constitute these two organs should be mutually adjusted to one another, before those

motions which cause all the variations of the human voice could be produced, conveyed to the brain, and there translated by the mind into sensations and thoughts. We all know from experience how necessary is their healthy action, when we find that some inconsiderable disorder in the throat is capable of producing hoarseness, and a more considerable one, a total loss of voice. From this we learn the complication of the apparatus, its delicacy and minuteness, and the necessity of the correct action of the various parts of which it is composed; yet this complicated action is continued, with slight interruptions, during the entire period of our lives.

But the vocal organs are so framed that they are not only capable of causing that variety of motions which are necessary for producing the endless variations of the human voice, but portions of them also subserve some of the most important functions of our bodies. Thus, the teeth aided by the tongue, both of which are most important agents in the formation of voice, act as a mill for grinding our food, preparatory to swallowing it. Then the combined action of the tongue and throat conveys it to the only place where it is useful, namely, the stomach. While the tongue is performing these functions, its nerves are acting as the medium of taste. Next, the passage between the mouth and the stomach presents us with a most marvellous adaptation. Part of the road is common to the breath and

the food; but a short distance down, this road divides into two branches, one leads to the lungs for the purpose of supplying them with air, without which supply life would speedily become extinct, and voice impossible; and the other, to the stomach, which conveys to it the food necessary for our support, to be there digested. If the food happens by accident to take the road leading to the lungs, the consequences would be fatal. How then is this prevented? There is a trap-door provided, over which the food passes, which is so constituted that without any thought or care of ours, it shuts every time we swallow, and opens every time we inhale or exhale breath. Nothing is more striking than the frequency, and at the same time the safety, with which this operation apparently so dangerous is performed; for, during a dinner party, where there is much conversation, this trap-door must open every time the guests breathe, and must shut every time they swallow; yet the accident, commonly called "going the wrong way," is of the rarest occurrence. Let the reader judge whether it is believable that this mass of complicated adjustments, adaptations, and correlations can have resulted from the interaction of atoms and forces destitute alike of volition and intelligence.

The anti-Theist will reply that these adjustments and adaptations bear no analogy to those formed by man, who fashions those which he originates out of

materials previously existing, and who is compelled to adopt a number of ingenious contrivances for the purpose of overcoming the obstacles which they interpose in the way of his realizing his purposes; whereas the adjustments and adaptations in question are gradual growths, the originating power acting from within in obedience to a law from which it is impossible to deviate, which gradually develops every part in relation to every other part.

With respect to this objection, I observe that, while it professes to show how these marvellous adjustments and adaptations can have originated without the intervention of intelligence, it leaves his difficulty precisely where he found it. It is no account of their origin to say that they are a growth. What, I ask, has enabled unintelligent atoms and forces destitute of volition and purpose to grow a mass of adjustments and adaptations, suitable for performing functions necessary for their existence, not a few of which are of so highly complicated a character, that it has taken ages of careful study and investigation before they have been discovered? Surely a cell possessed of the properties which Sir J. Lubbock has attributed to it in the work from which I have quoted above, could only have been produced by an intelligence of the highest order. He himself calls it "a standing miracle."

To account for the existence of the innumer-

able adjustments, adaptations, and correlations with which the animal and vegetable kingdoms abound, by telling us that "they grew," is to throw dust into our eyes. Tell us how, why, and by what agency devoid of intelligence they grow? Not only are they, and the parts of which they are composed, adjusted to one another, and to the organized being as a whole, but they are adjusted and correlated to the external universe; and unless they were thus adjusted and correlated it would perish. Can these, I ask, be growths? That they are not growths by means of any power acting from within them is certain. They must, therefore, have been the production of a being possessed of boundless power and intelligence, who was capable of adjusting the animal and vegetable kingdoms to the previously existing external universe, or of adjusting it to them, when as yet they existed only in His creative purpose. Further; as to the objection that the adjustments and adaptations in animal and vegetable bodies are the result of a power energizing within them, I have only to observe that, if this has been the mode of their production, Christian Theism has nothing to say to the contrary; for, respecting the mode in which the Creator has operated in effecting His creative work, and operates in upholding it in being, and directing and controlling it by His providence, it is silent.

3.—*The Adjustments and Adaptations by means of which the vocal organs, and the organism of the ear, are adjusted and correlated to the atmosphere.*

The vocal organs, and the organism of the ear, with all their wonderful adaptations and correlations, would have existed to no purpose but for the existence of another body, the atmosphere, which is not, like them, a growth; but an existence entirely distinct and independent of both. It must have been formed anterior to the birth of either vegetable or animal life on the globe, for without it neither of them could have existed; yet it is in the most intimate manner correlated to each. I ask the reader particularly to observe that, to render hearing possible it is absolutely necessary that the motions of the vocal organs should be conveyed to the organism of the ear, and reproduced in it. How, then, is this effected, for within the body there is no connecting link, by means of which the motions of the one can be transmitted to the other? This connecting link is supplied by the air, which, although it must have been brought into existence long prior to the formation of either organism, is so intimately correlated to both, that every motion which is produced by the one is faithfully transmitted by it to the other. The motions of the vocal organs produce atmospheric waves precisely corresponding to them, and these

produce motions precisely corresponding in the tympanum of the ear. The vastness of their number may be estimated by the consideration that minute as are the variations of sound, which we are capable of perceiving, there must be a wave in the atmosphere exactly corresponding to it which faithfully transmits every motion of the vocal organs to the ear. The whole of these adaptations and correlations, therefore, are inconceivably complicated; yet they work in harmony. Is it possible, I ask, to believe that this complicated machinery has been produced by the interaction of blind forces undirected by intelligence?

Here let it be observed that thus far this mass of complicated machinery has produced neither sound nor voice, but motions only. All that it has accomplished is to have transmitted these motions to the auric nerve, and through it to the brain. Still we have nothing but motions. Before either sound or hearing can be produced, another agent must be present, namely, a percipient and conscious mind, which must be capable of first setting the organism in motion; and then, when the motions have been transmitted to the brain, of translating them into sensations and ideas; and when they have been thus translated, to enable them to arouse the affections, and stir the emotions of our moral and spiritual being.

But while the atmosphere is so constituted, that

without it the production of sound, voice, and language would have been impossible, it also fulfils functions no less important in other departments of nature. To one of these, I must ask the reader's attention at the hazard of somewhat deviating from the direct line of my argument. Without it neither vegetable nor animal life could exist. It consists of a mixture of two gases, one of which is necessary for the support of vegetable, and the other of animal, life; and what is most remarkable, the gas which is necessary for the support of the one, is destructive of the other; and if either of them existed in proportions in any considerable degree varying from the present one, it would be destructive of both. How then, is this proportion maintained, when animals are constantly abstracting the one from it, and vegetables the other? So intimately are they correlated to it, that decay and death return to it those portions which growth has abstracted from it, and thereby its proper equilibrium is preserved. This is a marvellous adjustment; for, vegetable and animal life being yet non-existent, it must have been adjusted and adapted to the requirements of both while they were yet in the distant future. In a word, in this respect, its constitution may be justly said to have been prophetic. Such an adjustment the constitution of our minds compels us to ascribe to intelligent purpose, and forbids us to believe that it can have been the result of the interaction of forces

destitute of intelligence and volition. It would too much encroach on my space if I were to attempt to describe the other most important purposes which it realizes in connection with animal and vegetable life, and above all with the life of man.

Such are the complications of the instrumentality by which hearing is effected in man. How is it with that vast army of the animal kingdom, which possesses in some form or other this faculty of hearing? In their case the organism undergoes an indefinite number of modifications, each fitted to the condition of things in which the animal exists. How, then, does the anti-Theist attempt to account for these innumerable adjustments, and adaptations? He endeavours to persuade us that they have originated in a struggle for existence, in the course of which, by the throwing out of favourable variations, and the perishing of unfavourable ones, the endless varieties of animal organisms have become accommodated to their environment, and have by this means gradually advanced from imperfect to more perfect forms, until they have culminated in man. Such is the theory. What, I ask, is the answer of common sense? That the presence of intelligent purpose, united with boundless power, is a rational account of their origin; but that the anti-theistic mode of their production is both inconceivable and incredible.

I have given a somewhat minute description of the instrumentality by means of which sound, voice,

and articulate speech are produced, in order that I may impart to the reader a lively idea of the overwhelming force of the evidence which these adjustments, adaptations, and correlations furnish in proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator. But as others in numbers past comprehension exist in the human body, it will be desirable that I should adduce a few additional examples of the most important ones as illustrations of my present argument. Let us, therefore, give a brief consideration to

4.—*The Manner in which Vision is effected.*

The organism of the eye has always, and most justly, formed with Theists a favourite illustration of the argument from adaptation. Space will not allow me to enter on a minute description of it ; I shall, therefore, only draw attention to some of its most striking adaptations. As an organism, it is no less complicated than those by means of which we are capable of perceiving the innumerable modifications of the human voice. It is in the strictest sense an optical instrument, as much as, nay more so than, a telescope or a microscope, the distinction between them being that the eye is a growth, whereas these instruments are composed of substances previously existing, put together by the ingenuity of man, and so adjusted as to be capable of conveying rays of light in numbers inconceivably vast, and converging

them on that portion of the eye designated the "retina," which is an expansion of the optic nerve, which conveys their impressions to the brain, where the percipient mind translates them into that which we designate Vision.

In various points, however, the eye transcends all the optical instruments which have ever been invented by man for enlarging his sphere of vision. The telescope is constructed so as to enable us to see distant objects only, the microscope only those that are minute and near; but no instrument of human invention has been able to combine the two. The human eye, on the contrary, contains within itself a machinery of a most elaborate description, whereby it is capable of changing itself from a telescope into a microscope, and from a microscope into a telescope, on the order of the mind conveyed to it through the nervous system; and this takes place often every minute without our being conscious of the re-adjustments of its machinery. It also contains within itself an instrumentality, by means of which whatever is requisite for keeping it in constant repair is extracted from the blood. Spectacles, telescopes, and microscopes require frequent cleaning; the eye is supplied with a self-acting machinery which enables it to clean itself. To exclude excess of light, and to render objects visible when there is only a small supply of it, the hole in the eye called the pupil, through which the rays of light pass is so formed as to be capable of dilating

itself, when it requires a larger, and of contracting itself when it requires a less number of rays to enter it. This is effected by a number of nerves and strings of extreme minuteness, adjusted, and correlated together with such wonderful precision that throughout every change this hole retains its circular form. Thus, the chamber of the eye is a kind of *camera obscura*, which, when the light is too little, can enlarge its opening, and when it is too great, can contract it by a self-acting machinery. The retina, which is somewhere about half-an-inch in diameter, is a most marvellous structure. On it, whenever we see an extensive view, is painted by means of rays of light the entire landscape in a form inconceivably minute; yet so complete and perfect that under ordinary circumstances we are capable of distinguishing a minute change in the landscape, when the distance does not exceed two miles. Further, let it be observed that what we see is not the object itself, but a painting of it on the retina. Small, however, as is the retina, its structure is extremely complicated. The following is an abridgement of Sir John Lubbock's description of it in the work above referred to —

"Though no thicker than a sheet of thin paper, it consists of no less than nine separate layers, the innermost being the rods and cones which are the immediate recipients of the rays of light. The number of the rods and cones in the human eye is

enormous. At a moderate computation, the cones may be estimated at over three millions, and the rods at thirty millions. . . Light is the effect produced on us, when waves of light strike the eye. When four hundred millions of millions of undulations of ether strike the eye in a second, they produce red; and as the number increases, orange, then yellow, blue, green, and violet; but between forty thousand millions in a second, and four hundred millions of millions, we have no organ of sense capable of receiving the impression. Yet between these limits, any number of sensations may exist. We have five senses, and sometimes fancy that no others are possible. But it is obvious that we cannot measure the infinite by our narrow limitations" (*The Senses of Animals*, pp. 122, 123, 191).

Further, although we have two eyes, each of which possesses a retina, with an image of external things painted on it, yet they are so adjusted and correlated that no confusion of vision results therefrom, and we are only percipient of a single image; yet if one eye gets damaged, or even destroyed, we are able to see with the other, though we cannot embrace so large a field of vision.

Such are some of the most remarkable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations in that wonderful organ by which we are rendered capable of seeing. Thus far, however, we have got motions, undulations, and

vibrations only, not sight. Unless this complicated apparatus had been in the most intimate manner correlated to two other existences, it would have existed to no purpose. One of these is that element, distinct from, independent of, and external to, the eye which we call light; but which really only becomes light through the agency of the percipient mind. In itself, as above described, it is neither more nor less than an inconceivable number of vibrations of an intangible element, which is assumed to fill space, designated "ether." To enable sight to be produced it is necessary that the complicated organism of the eye should be so closely correlated to it, or it to the eye, as to enable the eye to collect and concentrate its innumerable vibrations on the retina, and thence to transmit them through the optic nerve to the brain. Still as yet we have got nothing but vibrations and motions. Before sight can be produced, this complicated apparatus must be correlated to another existence, namely, to a mind which possesses the power of translating these motions, which in their numbers numberless are concentrated on the retina, into sensations and thoughts, thus enabling us to acquire that mass of knowledge which is communicated to us through the faculty of vision.

Between the organisms through which we see, and those through which we become percipient of articulate speech, there is, however, this remarkable distinction. The first consists of two organisms, and the second

of three, adjusted to one another in the manner above described. Between the eyes, the ears, and the brain, there is a direct communication within the body by means of a set of complicated adjustments. This admits of our viewing the two eyes in the one case, and the two ears in the other, as a single complicated organism; yet so constituted, that, while each two concur in producing a common result, if one of each pair be destroyed, the remaining one is able to discharge its function so as to produce vision and the other articulate speech. But between the vocal organs and the ears, as already observed, there is no means of communication within our bodies. Each, therefore, unless the motions originated by the one could be transmitted to the other through a medium external to, and existing independently of, both, would be useless for the production of sound. But such a medium exists in the atmosphere, which must have had an existence not only independent of the vocal organs and the ear, but must have existed long ages prior to the formation of either. Surely, therefore, this adjustment of the one to the other—so complicated, yet, at the same time, so independent of one another; composed of parts so minute, yet by their adjustments and adaptations of part to part, so exquisitely fitted to realize a result so important to the well-being of man that without it he would have only possessed the powers of a mute—affords an unmistakable proof of the presence of a designing mind.

Objections have been urged against the argument from the structure of the eye, as affording proof of the existence of a Creator, to whose wisdom it is impossible to assign limitations, on the ground that it has several imperfections as an optical instrument. I quote from Dr. Carpenter's posthumous work, entitled *Nature and Man*—

"The perfection of this adaptation, however, has been partially denied by several modern writers, who have based their denial on a statement in a very interesting and instructive lecture on 'The Eye and Vision,' given some years ago by my very distinguished friend, Professor Helmholtz: 'Now it is not too much to say,' continues the lecturer, 'that, if an optician wanted to sell me an instrument which had all these defects, I should think myself quite justified in blaming his carelessness in the strongest terms, and in giving him back his instrument'" (p. 442).

Here I cannot help remarking, even if this statement of the Professor contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that it is utterly invalid against the preceding reasonings. It is undeniable that the adaptations and correlations above referred to actually exist. The question really at issue between the Theist and the anti-Theist is not whether the eye is a perfect optical instrument, but whether its intricate adjustments, adaptations,

and correlations can have resulted from the interaction of forces destitute of intelligence and volition; or whether they do not prove the presence of a designing mind. An instrument may not be one abstractedly perfect, but yet it may afford overwhelming proof of the presence of intelligence.

But, whatever we may think of the prudence of the language of Professor Helmholtz, the citation of it apart from the context in which it stands, is scandalously unfair, for it contains a statement which entirely qualifies the words above cited; and, as far as the Theistic argument is concerned, renders them absolutely nugatory. Let us again hear Dr. Carpenter—

"Everyone who has any knowledge of theological controversy will recollect how frequently the charge has been justly raised of unfairness of quotation; a single passage detached from its context may convey a meaning altogether different from that which it bears when taken with its context, so that even the devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. Those who take the anti-theological side are specially bound, as it seems to me, to abstain from doing the very thing for which they severely blame their opponents; and, yet I have seldom met with a case so unfair as the citation of this statement without any of the qualifications which it subsequently receives. The following are the salient points of Professor

Helmholtz's explanation:—If I am asked why I have spent so much time in explaining the imperfection of the eye, I answer that I have not done so in order to depreciate the performances of this wonderful organ, or to diminish our admiration of its construction. It was my object to make my reader understand that it was not any mechanical perfection of the organs of our senses, which secures for us such wonderfully true and exact impressions of the outer world. The perfection of the eye is practical not absolute—*i.e.* adaptation to the wants of the organism; the defects of the eye as an optical instrument being all so counteracted, that the inexactness of the image which results from their presence very little exceeds under ordinary conditions of illumination the limits which are set to the delicacy of sensation by the dimensions of the retinal cones" (p. 423).

The preceding observations apply exclusively to the human eye. In the animal kingdom the eye undergoes various modifications, by which it is adapted to the condition of things in which the animal is destined to live. Thus, the eyes of birds of prey are so constructed that they are able to discern a minute object, when they are soaring at a considerable height; those of animals which have to seek their prey during the night, so as to be able to see in a very small quantity of light—*e.g.* those of the mole

to a life of burrowing. Insects which are incapable of moving their eyes, and consequently if they had only two immovable eyes would be able to command only a very limited view, are endowed as a compensation with multitudes of little eyes, each of which is framed on the strictest principles of optics. To describe the endless modifications of this organ in the different orders of animal existence would occupy a space which would far exceed the limits which can be assigned to this entire work. Suffice it to say, they are as numerous as the different species of animal existence, which are now known to be almost past counting.

How, then, does the anti-theistic evolutionist endeavour to escape the inference that these innumerable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations must have been due to the action of a being possessed of an intelligence and a power to which it is impossible to assign limitations? Here, again, the old answer will be repeated, that they have been gradually evolved through the endless attempts of some primeval beings to adjust themselves to their environment at some remote period of the past; which at length resulted in the formation of a rudimentary eye, which has been gradually improved to its present form by the attempts of each succession of animal races, to adapt themselves to the ever varying conditions of their existence.

Whether this theory affords a reasonable account of the origin of the innumerable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations through which vision is produced, let the reader judge.

5.—*The Processes through which Nutrition is effected.*

The following facts are indisputable—

(i) Our bodies grow. To render their growth possible, a supply of food from some external source is necessary. This supply is provided.

(ii) Every act of exertion occasions a waste of their substance. The body, therefore, stands in need of constant repair. It contains a very complicated system of organisms, adjustments, and adaptations, mutually correlated to one another and to the external universe, which supply it with, and convey to every part of it, the materials necessary for repairing this waste, to which it is capable of imparting its own life, and of incorporating them with its own substance.

(iii) The wasted matter, if it remained in the body, would produce disease and death. How, then, is this catastrophe avoided? The body contains within itself a complicated machinery which relieves it from the presence of this noxious matter.

Whence, then, are derived the necessary materials to enable it to grow and repair its waste? Man cannot assimilate mineral substances until they

have been incorporated into other bodies, nor can he live on air or water. The needful materials must, therefore, be drawn from the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The animal portion of our food is composed of substances of vegetable origin, which other animals have incorporated into their bodies; and these of substances which have been incorporated into them and extracted by a very complicated machinery out of the earth, the atmosphere, and water; the power which enables them to do so being seated in the distant sun, without whose rays not a single vegetable could exist. It follows, therefore, that the supplying the child with the materials necessary for its growth into a man, involves an inconceivable number of adjustments, adaptations, and correlations, some of which unite the infant with the sun, ninety-three millions of miles distant, and with the universe beyond; for, to speak of nothing else, the force of gravitation operates at the remotest distance to which the telescope has enabled the eye of man to penetrate. Is it conceivable, I ask, that these adjustments, adaptations, and correlations can be accounted for by the anti-theistic theory?

The necessary supply of food having been thus obtained, I will now describe the processes by which it is converted into the various substances which compose our bodies. In doing this, it will be impossible to enter on a minute description of

them, for they are very complicated ones. The following description must be viewed only as a very brief and imperfect outline of them.

The food having been conveyed by the hands into the mouth, there finds ready at hand an apparatus, namely, the teeth aided by the tongue necessary for masticating it, its mastication being a necessary preliminary to its digestion. During mastication a distant gland, by a chemical process, secretes a fluid called saliva, which is conveyed by a pipe from the place where it originates into the mouth, where it is needed, and there gets mixed with the masticated matter, the union of the two being necessary to facilitate the future process of digestion. Thence by another set of machinery of no little complication, the food is conveyed to the stomach. In the course of this journey, it passes over the trap-door which I have above described, the failure of which to execute its proper function would be death.

In the stomach the process of digestion takes place, and the food is reduced into a pulp. This is effected by the aid of a secretion called the gastric juice, which is produced through a chemical process by a gland, whence it is conveyed by pipes to the place where it is wanted, namely, the stomach. It is particularly worthy of notice that this substance is only capable of dissolving dead matter; but while it acts powerfully on it, it leaves the living

stomach unharmed. Another remarkable peculiarity of it is that different animals secrete a gastric juice which is fitted to act on their different kinds of food, and which refuses to act, or only acts imperfectly, on other substances. When the food is sufficiently dissolved, the muscular ring of the pylorus, which guards the entrance of the bowels, and prevents the matter which has passed it from returning into the stomach, is relaxed, and allows its contents to pass into the duodenum. Here, for the purpose of completing the digestion, two other substances are required, namely, the bile and the pancreatic juice. Accordingly, two secreting apparatuses are provided ; and their secretions are conveyed by pipes to the place where their presence is necessary, namely, into the first of the intestines. Here the whole of the food which has entered the mouth, however numerous may have been the substances of which it was originally composed—those who are addicted to the pleasures of the table know how many they partake of at a single meal—is converted into a pulp nearly uniform in substance, called chyle. From hence the entire mass is propelled by a suitable apparatus through the bowels. These may not inaptly be described as a pipe, about six times the length of the human body, capable of lying in folds, and endowed with the power of propulsion by contraction. This last operation is effected by a

minute but very numerous and complicated set of muscles.

Complicated, however, as is the process, we are still destitute of a substance suitable for incorporation with our bodies. To provide this another process is necessary: the essence of the digested matter has to be strained off. Here, again, a very complicated machinery is provided, namely, a mass of innumerable capillary tubes, as small as hairs, which open their mouths into every part of the intestines, and drain off from the digested matter in its passage through them all in it which is useful for nutrition. These minute pipes expand into larger branches, and convey their contents into a common receptacle; and from thence by a suitable machinery it is, strange to say, propelled *uphill*, until it reaches the neck. It is obvious that in this uphill journey there must be a tendency to fall backwards, whenever the propelling muscles relax; but it finds, at suitable intervals, a machinery already provided resembling the valves of an ordinary pump, which open to allow it to pass upwards, and close to prevent it from falling downwards. This obviates the difficulty. From this receptacle a propelling power causes it to discharge its contents into a large vein through which the old blood is flowing, which conveys both to the heart.

Still, after these various processes have been

completed, and this long journey has been accomplished, the work of supplying the body with the materials necessary for repairing its daily waste is very incomplete. Before this could be effected, a fresh agency of a most extremely complicated character had to be brought into existence. The old blood in its passage through the body has had abstracted from it some of the materials most necessary for supporting life, one of which the new matter has never possessed. To supply this deficiency both require to be brought into contact with the air. How is this effected? By what must be admitted to be a wonderful set of adaptations. The bellows-like action of the chest, by the aid of a suitable machinery, forces the atmospheric air into the lungs, and these into millions of little bags, designated air-cells. But it is necessary that the old blood and the new matter should be brought into contact with these air-cells. To effect this an engine, namely, the heart, is found ready at hand, and prepared for working. It may be described as a pumping machine, but differing from ordinary pumps in possessing a self-acting power of contraction and dilation. The reader is probably aware that ordinary pumps depend for their successful action on being provided with valves, to prevent the water when once pumped up from falling back again. Accordingly, the heart is provided with this necessary apparatus, without which its power of propulsion would be useless. It

may be said to consist of two hearts, united into a single organ. Of these, one forces the old blood and the new matter into the hairlike capillary tubes of the lungs, which lie on the surface of the air-cells; the structure of which is so delicate as to admit of a free interchange of gases—the carbonic acid being given off, and the oxygen imbibed. From thence, after the old blood and the new matter have been sufficiently exposed to the action of the air, both are forced back into the other section of the heart, in order that it may force it by the aid of another set of highly complicated machinery through every part of the human body.

By the agencies above described, the old blood and the new material have been mixed together, and brought into a state fit for nourishing the body, enabling its glands to secrete the secretions necessary to enable its numerous organs to perform their functions, and to supply its waste. Still it is useless until it is conveyed to those parts of the body where it is wanted; but of this more presently. Here, however, I would ask the reader's attention to the marvellous fact, that from one and the same substance these glands secrete "about twenty different fluids, in their sensible properties, in taste, smell, colour, and consistency, the most unlike one another that is possible; thick, thin, salt, bitter, sweet, etc. And if from ourselves we pass to other species of animals, we find among their secretions not only the most

various, but the most opposite, properties; the most nutritious aliment and the deadliest poison; the sweetest perfume and the most fœtid odours."* Yet we are invited to believe that such a substance, the production of which would baffle the resources of all the chemists in the world, has been produced by forces destitute of intelligence.

The aliment necessary for nourishment has now arrived at that place from whence it is necessary, if it is to be of the smallest use, that it should be propelled to every part of the body. On its arrival here, it finds the machinery requisite for effecting this all ready at hand. The heart, a self-acting pumping machine is waiting to undertake the work of propulsion. It is capable of discharging two tablespoonfuls of blood at every beat into the arteries; and as each contraction is followed by a dilation the blood which was propelled by the contraction would fall backwards, unless a machinery was provided ready at hand necessary for preventing it. This consists of a set of valves placed wherever their services are required, which open to let the blood pass onwards, and close to prevent it from returning backwards. Destitute of these the heart could no more perform its functions than a pump can. It is further to be remarked that its dilation gives the heart the necessary rest.

* PALEY: *Natural Theology, revised to harmonize with Modern Science.*

The arteries constitute a very complicated system of pipes, resembling those by which a city is supplied with water; but unlike them, they are endowed with a contractile power to aid the pump—perhaps syringe would be the more expressive term—in its work of propulsion. These pipes gradually contract in size, until they become indefinitely minute. Here, however, the analogy between those which supply a city with water and those which supply the body with the necessary aliment ceases. There is no necessity that any portion of the water should be carried back to the reservoir from whence it came; but it is necessary, after the very complicated organism which is provided for that purpose has abstracted from the blood all that is required for the nourishment of the body, that the remainder should be returned to its source; and after having had its expended powers recruited by being mixed with new aliment, and by imbibing a fresh supply of oxygen in the lungs, should be returned to the heart, in order that it should be by it once more propelled on a fresh journey through the body.

Further: "To effect this complete circulation of the blood four cavities in the heart are necessary, and four are accordingly provided—two called ventricles, which send out the blood, one into the lungs, and the other to the mass of the body after it has been returned from the lungs; and two others called auricles, which receive the blood from the

veins: one as it comes immediately from the body; the other, as the same blood comes a second time into the circulation through the lungs . . . So that there are two receiving cavities, and two forcing cavities. The receiving cavities respectively communicate with the forcing cavities, and by their contraction unload the received blood into them. The forcing cavities, when it is their turn to contract, propel the same blood into the mouths of the arteries."*

This complicated system of pipes, the arteries and the veins, convey nourishment to every part of the body, and bring back again the superfluous matter to the proper place for enabling it to enter on a fresh journey. They are too numerous to be counted. They run along the surface of the membranes, pervade the muscles, and even penetrate the bones. Every tooth is supplied with an artery and a vein; the one to feed the bone, and the other to bring back the spare blood from it. At the point of junction the arteries and veins are inconceivably minute. The fact that one cannot prick oneself with a pin without drawing blood—that is, without rupturing a blood-vessel—will convey to the reader an idea of their number and minuteness. But in addition to this complicated system of pipes for the purpose of supplying nourishment, a system of

* PALEY: *Natural Theology, revised to harmonize with Modern Science.*

nerves, which acts as a kind of electric telegraph, pervades every part of the body, and establishes a rapid communication between every part of it and the brain. It consists of two sets of nerves, one of which transmits motions, and the other sensations; but neither of which are capable of performing the function of the other. The vastness of their numbers is proved by the fact that it is impossible to prick oneself with the finest needle without producing a sensation. By these means a rapid communication is established between every part of the body and the brain, where these motions are translated by the mind into sensations and thoughts. The whole enables information to be received by the mind, and a message returned in a time so short that to us it is imperceptible.

The above is a very imperfect description of the complicated machinery by which nourishment is conveyed to every part of our bodies, their waste repaired, the noxious matter drawn off from them, and the means by which a rapid communication is established between every part of them and the brain. It will, however, enable the reader to form some idea of the innumerable multitude of the adjustments, adaptations, and correlations which it involves—the absence of any one of which would mar the working of the whole; and its disorder, as we know from experience, causes disease or even death.

I must now ask the reader to pause, and calmly weigh the evidence which those numberless adjustments and adaptations furnish, that their formation must have been due to a being, to whose power and intelligence it is impossible to assign limitations. For my own part, I am almost tempted to accommodate the language of the Psalmist, and say: "Foolish is the man who says in his heart that they have been produced by the interaction of forces, destitute alike of intelligence, purpose, and voluntary agency, or in other words, 'There is no God.'"

Let me take one more illustration from the human body. Look at the hand. It will be unnecessary to enter into a minute description of the parts of which it is composed, or of the mode in which its bones and muscles are adjusted to one another. One thing, however, must strike every observer as a marvellous adjustment. What, I ask, would have been the result, if instead of our having four fingers and a thumb, we had had five fingers and no thumb? We should have been unable to accomplish with our hands one thousandth part of what we are now able to effect by them. The anti-Theist will doubtless ask us to believe that the thumb is a natural growth, the production of the unintelligent forces of Nature during a long course of evolution, acting through the principle of natural selection and the survival of the fittest; and that

traces of its gradual growth may be found in the lower animals. But what set these forces in motion to produce a thumb instead of a fifth finger? What period of time would it take to produce this single adaptation? And how, destitute of a thumb, or while one was gradually growing, could defenceless man have survived in his struggle for existence with animals of vastly superior strength? Let the anti-Theist answer.

It would have been easy to have continued these illustrations to almost any extent, because the universe is everywhere loaded with them; but I cannot but think, that those who are unconvinced by the adjustments, adaptations, and correlations which I have adduced, that intelligence must have presided over their formation, will still continue unconvinced by any additional number of them. At any rate, they will be amply sufficient to enable the reader not only to form a clear idea of the value of the argument in question, as affording proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator, but to use it himself, when he contemplates the other parts of his bodily constitution, or the innumerable adjustments and adaptations which exist throughout every part of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The author of Psalm cxxxix., whose knowledge of anatomy was doubtless extremely limited, who knew nothing of the nervous system, of the circulation of the blood, of the means by which it is

effected, or of the complicated machinery by which the food which is introduced into the mouth is rendered fit for the nourishment of the body, and conveyed to every part of it, yet, impressed by what is visible and palpable could justly exclaim,

"I will give thanks unto Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Wonderful are Thy works: and that my soul knoweth right well. My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret. . . . Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance, and in Thy book were all my members written, which day by day were fashioned, when as yet there there was none of them."

This is the language of common sense. It has been reserved for a certain class of philosophers and scientists to propound the theory that these innumerable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations have resulted from the action and interaction of forces incapable of forming a purpose, and destitute of intelligence and volition. If this has been so, these forces have effected results, compared with which all those effected by the combined intelligence of man are as nothingness. Let the reader judge.

Before closing this chapter, it will be desirable to take a single glance at the vegetable kingdom. Having taken a cell, let us now take a seed for an example. From it has been produced the mightiest monarch of the forest, the humblest plant, and

everything intermediate between them. To prepare it for its future destination—

"adjustments had to be completed between it and things in the earth, in the air, in the water, and in the distant worlds whence come light and heat. It has to live with and by the earths. It contains, ready and adjusted, an apparatus for decomposing earths, and turning their compounds into its future substance. It has to depend on water. It has, ready and adjusted, an apparatus for decomposing water, and nourishing its own material with the new liquid. Alongside of this partly retrospective apparatus exists a purely prospective one, ready made and adjusted, for pumping the new liquid elaborated by the last apparatus, for making it run uphill, and for spreading it out on this side and on that. The seed has to depend on air. It contains, ready and adjusted, an apparatus for decomposing air, and for incorporating its component parts in various forms with its own tissues.

"Again, if the other world, that is, the sun, is inaccessible to the seed, it does not follow that the seed is inaccessible to the other world. Other worlds have long arms. Across open spaces, towards bridging over which all the trunks grown in the forests during terrestial ages would not go so far as would a boy's boat towards bridging over the Atlantic—across these that other world can put forth its emanations till they reach the seed, till they enter into it, till they

pass through again and again its cone, till they diffuse over every one of its cells a force from on high, which, in ways we know not, turns its array of possible energies into actual powers, bringing forth noble products—that is, covering the earth with vegetation" (Arthur's *Fernley Lectures*, pp. 54, 55, 56).

I need hardly draw the reader's attention to the fact, that every one of the things above enumerated as necessary for the life and growth of the seed involves a countless number of previously existing adjustments, adaptations, and correlations; if those things were otherwise, both animal and vegetable life would perish. Is it conceivable that they can have been the hap-hazard productions of unintelligent forces?

I cannot forbear quoting one more passage from the same author, whose work I strongly recommend for the perusal of the reader—

"Yet what sense detects in the cells the apparatus for decomposing air, that for decomposing water; that for decomposing sunbeams, that for turning the heat ray to one use, the colour ray to another, the actinic to a third; that for compounding protoplasm, that for turning one element into fibre, another into complexion, another into odour, another into pumping force, what sense detects within the seed of the maple, the special apparatus pre-established to dot with its pretty bird's eyes generation after generation

of its offspring. To tell us that we do not know that these exist! It is just the thing that we do know. Apparatus may not be the right name for them. But the invisible power is there, and we know it. These various powers stand to one another in relations pre-established; and they, in turn, pre-determine long beforehand the relations of things which as yet are not in existence. But although they fill with wonder the minds of men, who are content to let mind work without lacing it up against free movement in search of cause or design—with wonder at the skill, the design, the adaptation, the power, of which they are full—they do not, any more than relation among inorganic bodies, present to us any moral ties, or virtues, or defects" (p. 56).

If, then, as Sir J. Lubbock affirms, "every cell in the animal body is a standing miracle," I think that we are entitled to affirm that every seed in the vegetable kingdom is also a standing miracle. But both these miracles sink into nothingness, if it is true that all the adjustments, adaptations, and correlations with which every part of the universe absounds; and which unite it into a complicated whole, so that what affects one part affects every other part; have been the result of the action and interaction of forces which are destitute of intelligence, incapable of purpose, foresight, or volition; and whose sole and only agency is necessary agency impelling them in

a course from which it is impossible for them to deviate to the right hand or to the left. If, then, we feel that it is one of the highest of certitudes, if when twelve dice are thrown at hap-hazard into the air, they fall a hundred times in succession with their aces upwards, that they are loaded, infinitely more commanding is the proof which the adjustments, adaptations, and correlations of the universe, existing as they do in numbers passing all human comprehension, furnish that it also must be loaded in every part. With what then only can it be loaded? I answer, With the presence of Deity, energizing in, directing, and upholding all its forces, so that if we ascend up into heaven, He is there; if we go down to hades, He is there; if we take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall His hand lead us, and His right hand shall hold us. If we say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm us, and the light shall be as the night; even the darkness and the light are both alike to Him. Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty. Thou hast created all things, and by Thy will they are, and were created; and even the minutest creature which exists was brought into being and fashioned by Thy boundless power and wisdom, and is the subject of Thy providential care.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXISTENCE OF THE MORAL NATURE OF MAN PROVES THAT A GOD EXISTS. WHO IS NOT A MERE IMPERSONAL FORCE, BUT A MORAL BEING.

BEFORE I attempt to offer a direct proof of this position it will be necessary to lay down certain fundamental principles on which this argument will be based. These are facts, the truth of which each of us may verify for himself, by an appeal to the affirmations of his consciousness. These form the highest of our certitudes. What, then, does it affirm ?

I.—It affirms that we are free agents—that is, that we possess a power of choosing between one or more alternatives, of originating action, and of adopting or refusing to adopt a particular line of action.

This position is controverted by anti-Theists. I must, therefore, endeavour to make the theistic position clear. It is objected, that when we affirm that man is a free agent that it is equivalent to

saying that he possesses a freedom which is devoid of limitations. This is a misrepresentation ; for all that we intend is, that he possesses a freedom of choice within certain definite limits ; that is, that he possesses a power to act or to forbear acting sufficient to constitute him a responsible agent. Into the origin of this power I shall not inquire, for it will be sufficient for the purpose of the present argument to prove that it exists as a fact in whatever way it may have originated.

As the possession of this power is one of the most important characteristics which distinguish man from all other agents in the world, it will be necessary clearly to point out the nature of this distinction. Physical agents, by which I mean beings devoid of volition, act in the manner in which they act, because they are incapable of doing otherwise. They act because they are forced to act; and they invariably act in the same manner under the same conditions. They are destitute of will, intelligence, and purpose. Force is the only thing which can set them in motion, and when they are once set in motion, they are incapable of acting in any other manner than that which the forces acting on or inherent in them compel them to act, notwithstanding any terrible consequences which may result from their activity. They know not what they do; they have no choice; to all persuasion they are deaf; and do what they may, no one ever thinks of holding them responsible

for the results which follow. Man, on the contrary, is the opposite of all this. He is capable of choosing between two courses of action which of them he will pursue. Though he is incapable of altering the forces which act in or on physical agents, he possesses the power of giving them a different direction from that which they must have taken, apart from his intervention; and of combining and directing them, so as to compel them to execute the purposes of his will, and thus make them, instead of lording it over him, his servants.

As this is a very important point in the Theistic controversy, I will illustrate my meaning by a very familiar example. A steam engine can only act in one way, as long as the forces acting on, or inherent in it, continue to energize; but man, although he is incapable of altering those forces, is capable of giving them a direction, within certain limits, according to his pleasure; or even, of bringing its action to a standstill. Thus, we never think of blaming an engine for any amount of destruction which it may occasion; but if the engineer has failed in his duty in controlling its motions, we hold him to be guilty of manslaughter or of murder, according to the degree of his culpable negligence. Physical agents we neither praise, blame, persuade, nor hold responsible, Men we praise, blame, attempt to persuade, and hold responsible, because we entertain no doubt that within certain well-known limits, they possess the

power of voluntary action. Whence this persuasion? We know, with an assurance of absolute certainty, that we ourselves possess this power; and we infer with an assurance of equal certainty, that all other human beings possess it likewise.

Here it is necessary to meet an objection. It has been urged by anti-Theists, as an argument against the theistic position, that various animals possess a freedom of choice, yet no one on this account argues that they are liberated from the laws of necessary agency. I fully admit that they, especially the higher orders of them, possess an intelligence, and a power to choose between two or more alternatives within certain narrow limits; but these limits are so narrow that no one considers them to be responsible for their actions. Noxious animals simply obey the impulses of their nature, and cannot help doing so. We destroy them, not because we hold them responsible, but simply because they are noxious. True it is, that on the higher order of animals, we inflict pain when they offend us; but we do this, not as a punishment for wrong-doing, but for the purpose of deterring them, through the influence of fear, from acting in a similar manner in the future. In this case the appeal is not made to any sense of right, or wrong, possessed by the animal, which merely follows the course which its impulses or its instincts suggest, but to the principle of the association of ideas. Thus, when a dog offends us, we whip him as a

deterrent from acting again in a similar manner; and our doing so becomes efficacious, because the animal associates the pain with the act in question, and therefore he avoids it for the future. But this is only efficacious when the pain is inflicted immediately after the offence; if it is delayed for any considerable time, it would fail to act as a deterrent, and would be cruelty pure and simple. But man understands what punishment means, however long it may be delayed after the crime; and our moral nature affirms, when retribution at last overtakes the offender, that the punishment is just; and he understands it likewise.

Further: We never charge an animal which has injured us with having committed a sin or a crime, because we consider, and that rightly, that it has only acted in conformity with impulses which it had no power to restrain; all that we demand is, that it should be prevented from doing mischief for the future. But with man it is the contrary. Why is this? It is because we feel assured that he possesses a power which would have enabled him to avoid doing the evil act. It follows, therefore, that whatever amount of intelligence and power to choose between different alternatives is possessed by animals; or even if the higher orders of them possess some of the rudiments of a moral nature; that between their endowments, and those of man, the gulf which separates them is so wide as to make us as it were by a

kind of intuition hold them irresponsible for their actions, while we hold men responsible. The possession of that degree of freedom which is necessary for constituting responsibility is an essential ingredient in the conception of a moral being.

II.—It forms a certitude, than which we have none stronger, that man is not a thing but a person. As this is an important point in the theistic controversy, anti-Theists have done their best to confuse this subject, by the aid of a number of metaphysical subtleties, into the discussion of which I shall not enter. I admit that it is difficult to give a logical definition of personality; but we all of us intuitively understand what we mean when we affirm that we are persons, and not things. Among other things, the conception of personality involves the power of volition, of free agency, and a sense of sameness and persistent existence during long intervals of time, notwithstanding any amount of change that we may have passed through during our previous lives. Thus we intuitively feel that we are the same beings that we were, say, some twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years ago, or from the earliest dawn of our conscious recollection, and no amount of reasoning can persuade us to the contrary.

The fact that we are persons, is one of the greatest importance in relation to our present

argument, because scientific men assure us that during the shortest of these intervals, our bodies have undergone so complete a change that our present bodies do not contain in them a single particle which they possessed at some not very remote period of the past. But notwithstanding this complete change in our bodily framework, we feel that it is one of our highest certitudes, that we were at the earliest dawn of our conscious recollection the same persons that we are at the present moment. From this the all-important inference is inevitable, that the beings which we designate Ourselves, have an existence distinct from the atoms which compose our bodies. This being so, it follows that other beings exist than those composed of matter impelled by blind unintelligent force; namely, beings which can neither be seen by our eyes, felt by our hands, weighed by our scales, nor become the subject of our senses.

The universe, therefore, consists of three orders of beings—persons, animals, and things. Stated briefly, a person may be defined for all the purposes of our present argument as a being which possesses self-consciousness, and which is capable of affirming of itself, I Myself, which no thing, and no animal, as far as we can judge, can. Animals, therefore, are destitute of those attributes which constitute personality, and are, consequently, irresponsible for their actions. On the other hand,

everyone who possesses personality, feels himself responsible for them and for the consequences which have resulted from them, however remote they may have been in point of time. This certainty that we exist, and that we possess the attributes above referred to, not only removes all difficulties in believing that other beings exist who possess similar attributes, but renders it in the highest degree probable that they do so. The above considerations, therefore, make short work with what is called materialism. I mention this in the present place for the purpose of pointing out the importance of the position in question.

III.—We possess the highest certainty that we are beings who are capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, and this, irrespective of any consequences which may result to ourselves; that there is something within us which tells us that we ought to pursue the conduct which is right, and abstain from that which is wrong, and which visits us with a feeling of self-condemnation if we disobey its dictates. This principle we call conscience, or moral sense; but it is immaterial to our argument by what term we designate it, or how it may have originated, provided we recognize its existence as a fact. I make this observation, because numerous attempts have been made to disprove its existence by propounding some particular theory about its origin; or by appealing to the imperfect

perceptions of savages, or other imperfect specimens of human nature, as affording proof that the belief that we possess any inherent perception of the difference between right and wrong, is a delusion. All that it is necessary to contend for, as far as concerns our present argument, is, that however it may have originated, it exists in fully developed men and women, and that it is a simple fact that each one of us (I may say all civilized men) is conscious that there is something within us which tells us that it is our duty to do this, and to abstain from doing that, and which visits us with various degrees of disapprobation, if we neglect to obey its behests.

What, then, in brief, are the certitudes which each of us intuitively feel that our conscience or moral sense affirms as indubitably true? I answer, that there is a distinction between right and wrong; that it is our duty to do what it affirms to be right, and to abstain from doing what it affirms to be wrong; that there is a clear distinction between things, as they ought to be, and things as they actually are; and that it is our duty to aim at realizing the former, and to strive to elevate both ourselves and others above the latter.

IV.—Our consciousness affirms that we possess certain affections widely different from the mere instincts of animals, which constitute what we designate character; and that we possess within

certain limits a power of modifying our characters either for good or for evil by means of another principle inherent in us, the principle of habituation. It is true that what we frequently, though inaccurately, designate character in other members of the animal kingdom, is capable of undergoing various modifications ; but these can only be effected by influence exerted on them from without. Man alone is capable of modifying his character *by an act of self-determination originating in himself.* This power renders him within certain limits responsible for his character, and for the actions which result from it. That we possess such a power is a direct affirmation of our consciousness, the existence of which anyone may verify for himself by carefully reflecting on his past history. The possession of a power of modifying our characters by an act of self-determination is disputed by anti-Theists. A very palpable instance to the contrary disproves this. It is an unquestionable fact that, by an act of self-determination, we can modify our tempers.

The above positions and the following arguments are based on the assumption that the concurrent affirmations of the consciousness of the overwhelming majority of mankind form the highest of certitudes—certitudes so complete that they cannot be shaken by ary amount of adverse reasoning. This has been denied, but the denial pushed to its legitimate consequences means intellectual suicide; for, every truth

which we arrive at by a process of reasoning must rest on the assumption that there are truths which we arrive at independently of any reasoning process whatever, whether inductive or deductive, which, being self-evident in themselves, ultimately rest on one or more of the affirmations of our consciousness as the ground of our convictions. If it be objected that the consciousness of some, such as madmen or visionaries, though real in themselves, point to no reality corresponding to them, I answer that the appeal must be made from minds thus diseased to the consciousness of men and women in considerable numbers, and when the overwhelming majority of their experiences concur, they must be accepted as an ultimate test of truth ; otherwise universal scepticism would be the result. It will be desirable that I should here briefly enumerate these certitudes as far as they bear on our present argument.

1. That we are persons in the sense above described.

2. That within certain limits we are possessed of free, as distinct from necessary, agency.

3. That we possess the power of originating action.

4. That although we cannot create any force additional to those already existing, we are capable of imparting to existing forces a direction different from that which they would have taken apart from our intervention, and thus of compelling them within certain limits to work out our pleasure.

5. That we possess a conscience, or moral sense, which utters authoritative judgments as to what it is our duty to do or to forbear doing; and which visits us with a feeling of self-condemnation if we neglect to obey its behests.

6. That our belief that moral beings exist, which are not ourselves, is no phantom of the imagination, but a great reality.

If these positions are true, they afford such strong evidence that a God exists such as Christians believe in, that we need not wonder that anti-Theists—whether they are Atheists, Pantheists, Positivists, or Agnostics—have endeavoured to prove that the affirmations of our consciousness are unreliable. A few additional remarks, therefore, will be necessary for the purpose of enabling the reader to judge of the fallacy of their objections.

Every form of anti-Theism is based on the assumption that mind is an evolution out of matter, that it has no existence apart from matter, and that the phenomena which we call mental, be they intellectual or be they moral, have been produced by a slow and gradual evolution out of that which originally possessed no one quality which we designate intellectual or moral. In a word, life has been spontaneously evolved out of non-life, or has been the result of the different arrangements, motions, and combinations of particles of matter during the ages of the past, which in their original state were devoid of life; and that

our intellects, with all their mighty powers, and our moral nature, with its noblest aspirations, have either sprung spontaneously into existence, or have been evolved out of things devoid of intelligence, moral agency, and affections. From these principles the inference has been drawn by anti-Theists—and, I admit, has been justly drawn if these principles are true—that what Christians understand by the words "spiritual" and "moral" has no objective reality; that moral agency is neither more nor less than a modification of physical agency; and that when we fancy that we are free to act, or to forbear acting, or are capable of exercising choice, we are really acting under as iron a law of necessity as that which regulates the motions of the planets.

This, stripped of all disguises, is the position taken by anti-Theists. Perhaps not a few of my readers may think that its best refutation is its simple statement; for I feel persuaded that, whatever anti-theistic philosophers and scientists may affirm, or by whatever amount of complicated arguments these positions may be attempted to be proved, that the common sense of the overwhelming majority of intelligent men and women will refuse to believe that intelligence has been evolved out of non-intelligence; personality out of that which is not only impersonal but unconscious; the freedom and the power of volition, which each of us is conscious of possessing, out of

agents devoid of both, which can only act because they are forced to act, which are destitute of all power to regulate or modify their action, and can only act in conformity with an iron law of necessity. In a word, our common sense affirms that it is impossible to evolve out of a thing that which was never in it.

But as these positions have been loudly trumpeted by men of unquestionable eminence as philosophers and scientists, as affording proof that our belief that we are free agents is no better than a delusion, and consequently that there can be no God who is a free agent; and as not a few are influenced by the authority of great names, it will be necessary to offer a few additional observations on them. These positions are, of course, propounded in a form less repugnant to common sense than that in which I have stated them above. Thus, it is affirmed that we can only act in conformity with the strongest motive, and that when different motives present themselves to our minds the strongest necessarily prevails, and leaves us no choice as to the course of action which we will pursue; and that all our actions are the necessary result of our characters, over the formation of which we have exerted no control, because they have been partly transmitted from ancestors more or less remote, and partly the creation of our surroundings. This being so it is urged that to speak of man as a free agent is absurd,

and therefore that the consciousness which we feel that we are free agents must be a delusion. Further: It is objected that what is commonly called "the freedom of the will" involves the affirmation that man can act without motives.

First, then, it will be necessary to inquire what is the meaning which anti-Theists attach to the word "motive," for it is the vagueness with which it is used in this controversy which gives to the objection its entire plausibility. The term "motive" is in popular language used to denote incentives to action which differ as widely as an affirmation of our conscience that it is a duty to act or forbear acting in this or that particular manner, differs from an impulse to gratify some of our animal passions. The reader will at once see that incentives which differ thus widely in character are incapable of being measured by any common measure of pleasure or pain with which our yielding to them may be attended. Anti-Theists in this controversy are in the habit of confounding together under the term "motive" things differing as widely as incentives to action arising from certain affections, passions, or impulses of our nature, from the determinations of our reason, and from affirmations of our conscience which tells us that it is our duty to pursue a certain course of action, notwithstanding any amount of self-sacrifice with which it may be attended; and then tell us that freedom of choice between these

is impossible, because the strongest motive must prevail, and that the strength of a motive must be dependent on the degree of pleasure or pain with which its gratification is attended. How, I ask, can we apply any common measure to the pleasure with which an animal gratification is attended, and an act of self-sacrifice in obedience to the demands of duty? The incentives to action, therefore, which are confounded together under the common term "motives," not only differ in degree, but in kind.

Abandoning all theory, let us consider what are the actual facts. Man is an animal, but he is also something more. His animal nature, unless restrained by some higher principle, would irresistibly impel him to seek sensual gratification as his highest good. His nobler affections lead him to pursue various ideals too numerous to mention. But in addition to these, there is another portion of his being, wholly different in character from his animal passions, or even his nobler aspirations, which asserts its right to prescribe to him what he ought to do, and what he ought to forbear doing—namely, his conscience, and his sense of right and wrong. This, despite of all the arguments which anti-Theists have adduced to prove that it has no independent existence in man, the testimony of every language spoken by civilized man proves that we are conscious of possessing. So completely have the

believers in man's personality, free agency, and power of self-determination, held possession of the ground during the ages of the past, that it is impossible to express oneself for five minutes in the ordinary intercourse of life, without using language which assumes that these things are not phantoms, but realities. Here, then, the intuitions of mankind stand in direct opposition to the theories and reasonings of anti-theistic philosophers and scientists.

One form of the anti-theistic theory, however, virtually concedes the point at issue, for it admits that we are capable of controlling those impulses which urge us to the pursuit of immediate pleasure so as to pursue future happiness as an end of life, rather than yield to present gratification which may be subversive of it. If this be so—and who, I ask, has not had experience that it is so?—it is evident that we are capable of exercising a choice between various impulses which of them we will follow; and that we are under no compulsion to yield to that which for the moment may appear to be the most seductive one: for the possibility of regulating our actions on prudential considerations involves a power of self-restraint, and of choosing between different incentives to action. The desire of present gratification is, perhaps, the strongest impulse in human nature, yet we all know for certain that we are capable of controlling and resisting it. No impulse is stronger than that which urges the

drunkard to his bottle ; but until he has arrived at that state of degradation in which by habitual indulgence in his vice he has destroyed his power of self-restraint, to say that he is irresistibly impelled to yield to temptation is contrary to fact.

The subject which we are now considering is so important in its bearing on the theistic controversy, that it will aid us in its elucidation if I give a brief analysis of what we are conscious of doing, when a number of incentives to different courses of action present themselves to our minds. Let us suppose that one of them is a strong desire to indulge in some particular pleasure ; another is an affirmation of our reason, that its gratification will be attended at some period of the future with results which are highly undesirable ; and that a third is an authoritative declaration of our conscience that to gratify the appetite in question would be morally wrong, and that it is our duty to abstain from it. What, I ask are we conscious of doing under these circumstances ? This question is capable of receiving a distinct answer, because they are circumstances of which every one of us has had experience. Let us assume that the desire in question is one of the strongest impulses of our animal nature. Do we, I ask, feel irresistibly impelled to gratify it ? I admit that its gratification is certain, if we shut out every other consideration, and concentrate our attention on the pleasure arising from its indulgence. But there

are other alternatives. We know on the testimony of our consciousness that we possess a power of withdrawing our attention from an impulse however strong, the indulgence of which our reason pronounces to be undesirable, or which our conscience pronounces that it is our duty to abstain from ; and of concentrating it on some other incentive to action, be it a prudential consideration, or a sense of duty ; and that by this means we are capable of giving the prudential consideration, or the sense of duty, the victory over the temptation.

What, then, are we each of us conscious of having done when we have been assailed by a powerful temptation to do that which our conscience has affirmed to be morally wrong ? Did we feel that we had no power of resistance, or that we were compelled to yield to the temptation ? We are certain of the contrary. We were conscious of possessing a force within us which we designate "will," which enables us by a vigorous exertion to withdraw our attention from the unhallowed gratification, and to concentrate it on our sense of duty. The struggle may have been, and often is, a hard one ; but who does not know from his own experience that in this way he has exerted a choice over different impulses to action, and that he has thus enabled his sense of duty to obtain the victory over those impulses of his nature, which, if unrestrained, would have impelled him to the pursuit of present

pleasure? Further: Although conscience utters its affirmations in the most authoritative form that it is our duty to do this, and to forbear from doing that, and we cannot help feeling that we ought to yield obedience to its behest, we all know from our own experience that obedience to its commands is not a matter of necessity, but that it is in our power to disobey them if we so choose.

Let us now briefly analyze the mode in which an evil impulse is yielded to. I here again appeal to our own experience. We feel a strong desire for its gratification. Conscience remonstrates; and a struggle takes place whether we will yield to its remonstrances, or indulge in the unhallowed gratification. For a while we hesitate. What takes place when we adopt the downward course? We allow ourselves to concentrate our attention on the sinful gratification. This imparts additional strength to the evil desire. Still we dare not gratify it, until the remonstrances of conscience have been in some way got rid of. What, then, is the next step? We persuade ourselves that the evil is not so great as conscience has affirmed it to be; at any rate that we will only indulge in the evil gratification once; and then cease for evermore. Having in some such manner silenced the remonstrances of conscience, the yielding to the temptation becomes possible—nay, inevitable. The next time the temptation occurs, its force becomes stronger, and the remon-

strances of conscience weaker, until indulgence after indulgence gives it undisputed sway; or to adopt the words of a sacred writer: "Sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death."

These various stages of this process whether for good or for evil are matters of our direct experience; and, therefore, their truth requires no further proof. Within these limits, we are conscious of being free agents; and by habitually pursuing the course of action which conscience approves, and by exerting the whole force of our wills in restraining our impulses in a contrary direction, we are capable of modifying our characters for the better, or by pursuing the opposite course of altering them for the worse. So far, then, the formation of our characters are within our own power, and we are responsible for the results which flow from them.

It has been necessary to dwell on these points somewhat in detail, because a principle called "Determinism" has been widely adopted by certain popular writers, and set forth by them in many seductive aspects. It is desirable that the reader should clearly understand what this term really means, and be made aware of the hollow foundation on which the entire system rests. Determinism is a term recently invented for the purpose of getting rid of the harsher expression "Fatalism," which is its real equivalent. When stript of all disguises, it means that our actions are determined by as necessary a

law as that which governs the motions of the planets; that human actions are all calculable; that man is the creature of his birth and his surroundings; that our belief that we exercise any choice in our mode of acting is a delusion, and that will is a factor which exerts no influence on the course of human actions. In a word, that force, and not a being who possesses the attributes which Christian Theism ascribes to God, rules the universe; and that the God of Christian Theism is a creation of the imagination.

Let the reader observe, that to the various forms of this theory, as it is propounded by anti-theistic writers, there is one effective reply, namely, that we profess no higher certitudes than the affirmations of our consciousness; and that one of these is a conscious perception, that within certain limits, in every act which we perform, we are free agents. Of this we are as absolutely certain as that two and two make four. Let it be observed that I am not speaking of abnormal specimens of mankind, that is, of men who are sunk into such a state of degradation, that they, like animals, act on the first impulse which presents itself,—I fully concede that there are such —but of persons we meet with in ordinary life, who are in the habit of employing their reasoning powers in determining the course of action they will pursue. If you were to tell one of these, who was a stranger to the teachings of the anti-theistic philosophy, that

he possessed no control over his actions, but that in everything he had done during the day, he had acted in conformity with an iron law of necessity, which rendered it impossible that he could have acted otherwise; he would reply: "I am certain that this affirmation of yours is untrue, for it is contradicted by every fact of my daily experience." Nay, more: in practical life even the sturdiest necessitarian acts on the assumption, that it is possible to exercise a choice among the various incentives to action that present themselves to his mind which of them he will follow; and on the additional assumption, that others possess this power also. The truth is, that necessitarians only affirm that man is not a free agent when they philosophize; but when they engage in practical life they act like other men. If a burglar should plead as an excuse for an act of burglary that he was impelled to it by a set of forces which he had no power to resist, and that by the same forces he was compelled to use a revolver in case he met with resistance, it may be questioned whether a single necessitarian could be found who would accept such a plea as valid. But what is practically untrue must be theoretically false.

Before closing this portion of our subject, it will be desirable that I should notice one objection more. Nothing can afford stronger proof that there is something in man which is capable of controlling his strongest impulses, than the martyr in obedience to

the dictates of conscience freely yielding himself up to a torturing death, notwithstanding every inducement held out to him by the persecutor to deny his conviction and live. It will not be denied that the desire to live is instinctive in human nature, and that it contemplates a torturing death with horror. Yet it is a fact beyond dispute that numbers in obedience to a sense of duty have chosen such a death rather than by apostasy to live. It has been objected, however, that this proves nothing in favour of our present argument, for the martyr only obeys his strongest motive, and is incapable of acting otherwise. In a word, he has made this sacrifice in the full persuasion that he will receive ample compensation in a world beyond the grave for the torments which he has endured here, and that it is this belief which has enabled him to triumph over them. To this I answer, even if this is a true statement of the case —which it is not—that it proves that the martyr is no mere machine which acts because it cannot act otherwise, but, on the contrary, that he possesses a power of choosing between the alternative of a torturing death, and life with many prospects of enjoyment—in other words, he is a voluntary agent.

I have no wish to deny that a firm belief in the unspeakable realities of the unseen world has largely contributed to the support of many a martyr in his trying hour. Few, I hope, will venture nakedly to affirm that the noble army of martyrs—and other

religions besides Christianity have had their martyrs —have yielded themselves to tortures and to death in obedience to an iron law of necessity. Have they, I ask, had no choice? Have they had no power to apostatize? But there have been those who have yielded up their lives in obedience to a sense of duty whose belief in the future state was extremely uncertain. Such, if the *Phædo* of Plato be not a fiction, was Socrates. The philosopher had before him the alternative of a fully secured escape from prison, or certain death. Yet he chose to die. What sustained him in this resolution? Not a certain conviction that he would survive the stroke of death, or that he would realize his greatest happiness by dying. He himself expressly affirms, that although he had a hope that death would not be the termination of his being, yet that he had nothing certain to affirm respecting it. The alternative before his mind was a possible survival, in which case he would hold converse with the gods, the heroes of the past, the great and the good; or else that death would be a sleep undisturbed by care from which there could be no awakening. Yet, uncertain as was his expectation of survival, he chose to die, under the conviction that it was his duty to obey his country's laws. Was the philosopher, I ask, in adopting this resolution, impelled by forces which rendered it impossible for him to act otherwise? Or is the man who rushes into the waves to save the life of another at the hazard of his

own, impelled to do so by forces which leave him no choice whether he will do so, or continue a spectator of the drowning man being submerged by the angry waves at a safe distance on the shore? All that is best in human nature repels such a suggestion. What is the legitimate, I may say the necessary, conclusion which follows from these premises? A moral world exists, in which freedom reigns; and if a moral world exists, a God must exist who is a moral being.

Before entering on the direct proof which the moral nature of man affords of the existence of a God, it will be desirable that I should succinctly set before the reader the chief facts respecting it which have been established in the course of the previous reasonings, and on which the following arguments will be based.

1. That personality, as we commonly understand that term is a thing which actually exists, whatever account may be given of its origin; and that the attempts of anti-Theists to explain away that personality which each of us is conscious of possessing, and substitute something else in the place of it, are failures.

2. That a power exists which we designate "will," which is the only force the existence of which we are directly conscious.

3. That we are conscious of possessing a power of originating action, which enables us within certain

limits to give a different direction to the forces which act in the world of necessary agents, from that which they would have taken apart from our interference, and thus of making them effectuate our pleasure.

4. That within certain well-understood limits, we possess a power which we designate "Free Agency." This power enables us to choose, between the different incentives to action which present themselves to our minds, which of them we will follow, and that we possess such a power we are as certain as of our own existence.

5. That we possess a power which is capable of discriminating between right action and wrong action, virtue and vice, what is morally right and what is morally wrong. This power is commonly known by the name of a "moral sense." All, however, which is required for the purpose of our argument is that we should recognize the existence of this power as a fact by whatever name it may be designated.

6. That we possess a number of aspirations, intellectual and moral, of a wholly different character from any quality which is possessed by an animal or a physical agent.

7. That we possess, as an essential portion of ourselves, a power which we designate conscience, which tells us with authority that it is our duty to do this and to forbear from doing that, and which visits us with a feeling of self-condemnation if we refuse to obey its behests; which also affirms

that there are certain things which are right and proper, and which ought to be done; or, in other words, a power which raises us above that which is actual to the contemplation of something which transcends all the experiences of the past or of the present—that is, the ideal, or something in which perfection resides.

Lastly: that matter, motion, and force, in fact all physical agents, are destitute of every one of these characteristics.

Assuming these positions to be true, let us now consider what evidence they afford of the existence of a God who is not the mere impersonal force of anti-Theism, but a moral being.

1. They prove that the universe consists of two orders of existence, which are separated from one another by an interval so wide that they possess no point in common: namely, beings which possess conscious personality, and things which are utterly devoid of it. What conscious personal beings are, we all know from our own experience. Experience, it is true, does not tell us what unconscious impersonal agents are, but our observation renders it certain that they are devoid of intelligence and the power of self-direction. Now, according to anti-theistic theories, in the universe in its primeval form nothing but impersonal unconscious agents existed, that is, matter, force, and motion. How, then, have personal conscious agents been brought into existence?

There are only three alternatives. Either their existence is due to some act of spontaneous generation; or to the hap-hazard action and interaction of matter, force, and motion, neither of which possessed in itself anything remotely resembling consciousness; or to the energetic will of a being, himself a person, who possessed in himself a power adequate to create finite conscious personal agents. Which of these alternatives is the rational one let the reader judge.

2. That a power of originating action; of giving a different direction to the forces which energize in the world of necessary agents from that which they would have taken apart from man's intervention; of choosing between different incentives to action which of them we will follow: in a word, everything which is included under the term "free agency," in the sense in which it is used by Theists, unquestionably exists. Whence, then, has come free agency? How has it been produced? The anti-theistic theory admits, as I have intimated above, that the universe in its primeval form contained nothing but matter, force, and motion, all of which were alike destitute of consciousness, personality, and freedom. Is it credible, I ask, that these by any amount of manipulation should have produced out of them that which was never in them? Can anyone in his senses believe that by any re-arrangement of the atoms which

compose the table on which I am writing, or by any alteration in their motions, any being can be produced out of them which is capable of self-regulation, of exercising choice, or of feeling any of the affections of our moral nature, such as a sense of justice, a feeling of benevolence, or an aspiration after holiness? Common sense affirms that before such things can be evolved out of them, they must be first involved into them from a source external to themselves. That source must be a being who has, inherent in himself, the power and the will to create a finite moral agent; or, in other words, a God must exist who is a moral being. It will be time for anti-Theists to ask us to accept their theories when they have succeeded in producing a free agent out of matter in which nothing but necessary forces are inherent; or even the lowest form of life out of that which was previously destitute of it.

3. That it is a fact that we possess a power of discriminating between right and wrong, between virtue and vice, between what is noble and what is base, a power which is commonly called a "moral sense." Whence came this power? Anti-Theists propound a singular theory of its origin. Primeval man was originally selfish; that self-regard led him to seek his own greatest happiness, and that in the course of ages the discovery has been made that one's own greatest happiness would be best realized by

pursuing that line of conduct which we now designate virtuous; in other words, that a virtuous man is a clever calculator of the results of actions, and a vicious man a bad one. With respect to this theory, it will be only necessary to observe that I have elsewhere proved that it is no explanation of the facts of our moral nature. But if it were otherwise, we are entitled to demand an explanation of a further fact. The primeval atoms, forces, and motions were neither selfish nor otherwise; they pursued their course without taking heed of consequences. How, then, did they succeed in producing a moral being? The anti-theistic theory, therefore, hopelessly breaks down; and the only alternative to it is the theory of Christian Theism, that the existence of a moral nature in man proves the existence of a God who is a moral being.

4. That it is a fact that man possesses lofty aspirations, both intellectual and moral. His intellectual ones have enabled him to measure the distance, and to explore the nature, of the remotest globes; his moral nature inspires him with a feeling of awe when he contemplates the starry heavens and the boundlessness of space. He also possesses affections, such as we are certain no necessary agent has. Whence came these? Can an atom, a molecule, or a necessary force, or any combination of the two entertain a lofty aspiration? Can either feel awe, gratitude, or love; a feeling of self-appro-

bation, or one of self-condemnation? Can such things be imparted to them, by any re-arrangement of atoms or of motions inherent in them? Our common sense replies, Incredible. Whence, then, came they? The only rational answer is, that they prove that a being exists, possessed of power and wisdom adequate to their production, who is not an unintelligent force, but a moral agent.

5. We now come to the most important proof of the existence of a God who is not a mere force, but a moral being: namely, that derived from the testimony of conscience, when it affirms a law of duty. Its importance is so great that we must consider it in considerable detail.

It has been urged by some writers that our conscience and moral sense furnish us with a direct intuition of a God. This, I think, is to place a weight on the argument which it will not bear. I myself am unable to discern that I possess such an intuition; and I infer that others are equally destitute of it. Besides, if such an intuition really existed, it would be universal, which it certainly is not.

That of which conscience really affirms the existence is an all-commanding law of duty, which free agents are bound to obey, but which it is possible for them to violate. From this the inference follows, that a being must exist to whom that duty is

due, that is, who is the centre of obligation; and from its affirmation that such a thing ought to be in contradistinction to that which actually is, our reason draws the inference that a being must exist in whom the idea of perfection is realized; and that imperfect and finite beings ought to direct their efforts to realize the perfection of the perfect. Further: In visiting the violation of its behests with a sense of self-condemnation; and, in cases of great guilt, with a feeling of remorse; it conveys to the sinner an intimation that in some way or other he will reap that which he has sown.

What, then, is the precise idea which is conveyed to our minds by the words "It is our duty," when conscience authoritatively proclaims it is our duty to do this, or to forbear from doing that, and this without any reference to the consequences that may result to ourselves from obeying its commands? I answer, that we are under an obligation to some being external to ourselves to act in the manner which it directs.

It is true that it is not uncommon to say that there is a duty which we owe to ourselves. But this is a metaphor. All that we really mean is, that we are so constituted as to prove that it is the function of the higher affections of our nature, our reason, and our conscience, to bear rule over the lower ones; and that when the latter usurp the place

which belongs to the former, the balance of our mental constitution is upset. We cannot in any strict sense of the word "owe" a thing to ourselves, because this would involve being debtor and creditor to the same person at the same time, which is absurd. A duty, therefore, must be due to a being who is external to ourselves; and as we intuitively perceive that we can owe no duties to things, it follows that a duty can only be due to a personal moral agent. A moral agent, therefore, must exist, in whom all obligation centres—that is, one who possesses the attributes which Christian Theism ascribes to God.

Again: The idea of duty implies that the being to whom the duty is due, stands to us in the relation of a benefactor who, prior to the duty being due, has conferred on us benefits, in return for which conscience affirms that he has a right to the duty in question. It, therefore, authoritatively affirms that we owe duties to all who have benefited us. But there is one benefit which we have received, existence and its accompanying blessings, without which all subordinate ones would be impossible. If, then, we are neither self-created nor evolved out of unconscious matter, nor produced by means of various arrangements of the molecules which compose our bodies, a moral being must exist, who has bestowed on us every blessing which we enjoy. To Him, therefore, every duty which man can

render must be due, and in Him every obligation centre.

Moreover: Our reason and conscience affirm that we owe duties not only to the Author of our being, but to others, and even to those who have not benefited us. What, I ask, makes us recognize these as duties? What so unites us to others, that it becomes a duty on our part even to practise acts of self-denial in order that we may do them good? I answer, that we are so constituted that we intuitively feel that the moral law is reasonable which requires us to do to others as we would that they should do to us. How, then, have we become so constituted? Is it credible that such a conviction has been produced by the meeting together of a multitude of unintelligent atoms impelled by blind forces acting under an iron law of necessity? But if this is unbelievable, what is the only possible alternative? That this constitution of our being must be due to the will of a Creator, who, being Himself a moral being, has so framed our conscience and moral sense, as to pronounce this duty to be reasonable, just, and good; and who, therefore, has a right to say to every moral being whom He has created, with an authority which conscience tells us we ought to obey: "You shall do to all men as you would desire that they should do to you." I fully admit that, apart from this, it may be convenient, and even that it may gratify some impulse of our nature, to

act kindly towards others; and even that an impulse may be so strong as to prompt us to an act of self-sacrifice on their behalf; but it is impossible to prove that we are under any obligation so to act, except that it is the will of Him that made us that we should do so, and that He has a right to demand obedience on our part.

Further: A moral law involves the conception of a moral lawgiver. This is a point the bearing of which on our argument is so important that I must endeavour to make it clear. I have already observed that a physical law denotes an order of events, and nothing more; and that physical agents act as they do because they are incapable of acting otherwise. But moral agents act in conformity with a law of a wholly different character. Moral law is not an expression of the order of actions, such as they actually occur in the moral world; but it proclaims an order of actions such as they ought to be. Moral law, therefore, contemplates an ideal up to which moral beings ought to act; and its conception involves the idea of an authority which has a right to command, and of a power able to enforce its sanctions. But authority can only reside in a moral agent; and supreme authority only in one to whom we are supremely indebted. But conscience, in affirming the existence of duty, affirms the existence of a moral law which is obligatory on man, and pronounces its censure on those who disregard it. Its

affirmations, therefore, prove that there is a God; its approbation that He is on the side of well-doing; its censure that He is opposed to wrong; and the remorse which it occasions, that under His government evil men will ultimately reap as they have sown.

Once more: When conscience proclaims, "You ought to do this;" "You ought not to do that;" what is the idea involved in this its authoritative utterance? The word "ought" means "owe it;" "you ought," "you owe it." The question therefore arises, "Owe it" to what, or to whom? I answer, that it is impossible to feel that we can owe anything to blind matter, force, or motion. Their action may be, and frequently is, beneficial to us; but we instinctively feel that we owe them no thanks, because they cannot act otherwise than they do. Thus, the man would be mad who would return thanks to a train for carrying him safely on a long journey. The only being to whom it is possible to feel that we "owe it" to do this or that, is one who has benefited us, but who could have withholden the benefit if such had been his pleasure, *i.e.* a free agent. The declaration of conscience, therefore, which authoritatively affirms, "You owe it—" (that is, "you ought")—"to do this," carries with it the conception of a God, who is our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, in whom the obligation centres.

As a substitute for moral obligation as propounded

by Christian Theism, modern anti-Christian unbelief has propounded a system of morality designated "Altruism," which teaches that it is our duty to labour for the good of others, without regard to any other consideration. It therefore dispenses with the being of a God; denies that conscience and a sense of moral obligation are original principles in man; affirms that while each individual man will at death pass into a state of unconsciousness, from which there will be no awakening, yet that it is his duty to labour for the good of future generations, in the elevation of which he will not participate; and that while the combined labours of successive generations will, after the lapse (it may be) of millions of years, at last produce an altruistic millennium, in which human nature will be so improved that it will be as natural to seek the good of others as it is in our present low moral condition to seek the good of self. Yet let it never be forgotten, that the only immortality which each self-sacrificer for the good of others is allowed to contemplate, will be that his noble acts of self-sacrifice will survive in the grateful remembrance of future generations. Such, in brief, are the principles of moral obligation, which the most elevated form of modern anti-Theism propounds, for breaking the force of that proof of the existence of a God which is furnished by the moral nature of man, and which it vaunts to be an adequate substitute for what it is pleased to

designate the worn-out moral teaching of the New Testament.

As this system is now loudly proclaimed, by not a few persons who hold a high position in the intellectual world, as the Gospel of the future, it will be necessary, before I close this chapter, to offer a few remarks on its leading principles.

First: With respect to its position that it is our duty to labour for the good of others, without any reference to a God, about whose existence we can know nothing; or any expectation of good resulting to ourselves, either in this world or in a world beyond the grave. How, I ask, do we know that this is our duty? The Altruist will reply that it is the highest conceivable form of virtue to act on the principle of pure disinterestedness; that this alone is noble, and to be influenced by what we do with a view to any good resulting to ourselves is mean. I reply, Does not virtuous action conduce to self-elevation? Is not an advancement in purity, holiness, and benevolence an object worthy of pursuit? Is the anti-Theist justified in denouncing the desire for self-elevation, or the wish to bring our animal passions into subjection to the higher principles of our nature an unworthy motive? If it be a duty to labour for the good of others, why, I ask, is it not equally a duty to labour for the good of self? Further: If the hope of realizing this helps to raise us to a higher elevation of character, or to subdue the lower impulses of

our nature, why speak of self-regard as degrading? A reasonable self-regard is one of the essential elements of our nature. This being so, all attempts to exterminate it will be futile.

Second: With respect to the altruistic position, which affirms that it is our duty to labour for the good of others, even of generations yet unborn, without any reference to a God, and regardless of the results which our exertions may entail on ourselves; and this, too, while it is certain that in the life of these future generations we shall have no share; again I ask, how do we know that this is our duty? Conscience only affirms that we owe duties to those to whom we are under obligations. What obligations on Altruistic principles, can we be under to the non-existent? If, then, duties are due to those who have never benefited us, they must be found in the will of one who is our Supreme Benefactor, and who, as such, has a right to demand every service which we can render, that is, God. But if there is no God, or if we are entitled to frame our conduct without any reference to Him, it is impossible to prove that anyone who has not benefited us has a right to claim duties at our hands. Such a one may appeal to our kindly feelings; our better impulses may prompt us to help him to the utmost of our power; but neither kindly feelings nor impulses are duties; and conscience affirms a stern law of duty which has a right to our obedience, not because we possess

kindly feelings, but because it is our duty so to do. That law of duty, therefore, affirms the being of a God.

What, then, is Altruism? Viewed at its best, it is Christian morality shorn of every moral and spiritual force which, amid the strong impulses which reside in our animal nature impelling us in a contrary direction, can render the moral law which it announces a dominant principle in man. If, on the other hand, the Altruist appeals to the principle of self-regard which is inherent in human nature, and urges that the effort to realize the highest happiness of others is the most certain means of realizing our own, the question will present itself: How am I to be certain of this? Tastes differ. Even if you are right I may never live to reap the fruit of my labours. It is useless, therefore, to sacrifice present gratification in the expectation of some future good which I may never live to enjoy. If there is no God, and no hereafter for man, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The person who adopted this sentiment as his own knew from painful experience what a life spent in struggles and sufferings encountered in promoting the good of others meant; and his opinion on such a point is of far greater value than are the opinions of any number of theorizers who have never encountered either struggles, dangers, or sufferings on their behalf.

Before concluding this chapter, it will be desirable that I should offer a few observations on the results which follow from the anti-theistic position in their bearing on human conduct. These are of so terrible a character, that thoughtful men may full well arrive at the conclusion that there must be some flaw in the reasonings by which it is sought to be proved that there is no God, and no hereafter for man. I abridge the following positions from the work of an eminent positivist and agnostic writer,* entitled, *The Service of Man*—who has had the courage to carry out the principles on which this system is based to their legitimate consequences.

1. Necessary law reigns in the moral world, and men are under a delusion in imagining themselves free agents.

2. That good men and bad men are irresponsible for the goodness and the badness of their actions; the good and the evil which is in them being the necessary result of the conditions of their birth and their surroundings.

3. That it is impossible for a man by any act of his own to modify his character, which has been formed for him and not by him.

4. That what we call a bad man is no more responsible for the evil which he does than an engine is for killing a man who trespasses on the line of rails.

5. That all efforts to succour the weak and the

* Mr. Cotter Morison.

miserable are an interference with the laws of evolution, which, if not interfered with, would crush them out of existence, and thus by preventing them from propagating their evil kind, hasten the advent of the anti-theistic millennium.

6. That all attempts to convert the evil man from the evil of his ways are as much lost labour.

7. That the sooner we get rid of the idea of responsibility, the better it will be for society, and moral education.

8. That the punishments which society inflicts on evil-doers have no other justification than the right of self-defence, their object being not reformation, but deterrent.

9. That the Christian doctrine of forgiveness of sins is pernicious, and destructive of the best interests of society; and that Jesus Christ, when he promised paradise to the robber, who on the cross, professed faith in him, did an act which was highly censurable.

10. That the service of God is a hindrance to the service of man.

11. That the principle of evolution, if left to take its course unimpeded by the action of so-called benevolence, will gradually extirpate the weak and the wicked, and thus bring about a state of things at some distant period of the future, in which none will survive but the good and the strong.

12. That, as man's individual consciousness will

perish at death; all those who have laboured to promote the advent of this anti-theistic millennium will have no share in its glories.

These positions necessarily result from the principles on which anti-Theism is founded. It is true that few anti-Theists have had the courage to state them thus boldly; but it is no less true that they are the logical consequences of those on which this system of philosophy is founded. They speak for themselves. I shall, therefore, not occupy the reader's time in endeavouring to prove that if they were universally adopted as the guide of life, they would subvert the principles on which obligation rests, those which lie at the foundation of society; and that every effort which is made in the modern world—and, blessed be God, it abounds with such efforts—to remedy the evils which meet us at every turn, mercy, the milder virtues, every hospital, and every institution to aid the weaker members of society, would be injurious to the best interests of mankind.

This system, therefore, instead of realizing a millennium, would bring about a condition of things far more terrible than any which has been realized in the history of the past. If anti-Theism is true, the moral world is the creation of three necessary agents, matter, force, and motion; and they ought to be left for the future to pursue their course unimpeded by man. Here the Theist may justly object: If the

universe consists of nothing but matter, force, and motion, how can man, who is their creation, impede their resistless force?" Yet the author I have referred to, with no little inconsistency admits that he can, and pronounces that in so doing his action is pernicious; and he even doubts whether the results of medical science are not so, in enabling the weak to live longer, and thus propagate their evil kind, whom, apart from its interference, the iron forces of Nature would crush out of being. But if such are the results of anti-theistic principles, what conclusion are we entitled to deduce from them? As in mathematics, when certain premisses lead to absurd conclusions, the mathematician affirms with the fullest conviction of certainty that they are untrue, so in like manner we are justified in inferring that principles whose practical working would result in moral confusion are false also. It follows, therefore, that our moral nature testifies to the existence of a God, who is not an impersonal force, but a moral being, a person, a free agent, who, having created us, having endowed us with every faculty, and having bestowed on us every means of happiness we possess, is the centre of all obligation; to whom is, therefore, due worship, reverence, love, and every service of which man is capable, and who is entitled to say to every moral being whom He has created: Be thou holy, for I, the Lord thy God, am holy. Act towards every man as you would that that man should act towards

you; for I, who am your Father, am his Father also. Conscience, therefore, when it affirms a law of duty, affirms that a being must exist in whom that duty centres, *i.e.* that there is a God, who is the Moral Governor of the world, to whom we are responsible for our conduct here; and who, although clouds and darkness obscure our view of His present government of the world, will ultimately render to every man according to his deeds.

CHAPTER IX.

POPULAR OBJECTIONS AGAINST CHRISTIAN THEISM—THEIR VALUE ESTIMATED.

I HAVE placed the words "Christian Theism" at the head of this chapter, because, with the exception of Judaism and Mahometanism, it is the only form of theistic belief which attributes to the Deity a moral character which has a direct bearing on human conduct. It is true that a body of Theists exist, though their numbers are gradually diminishing, who, while they reject the supernatural element in Christianity, ascribe to God a character similar to that which Christian Theism attributes to Him. It will be unnecessary, however, to give to this form of theistic belief a separate consideration, because, as far as it resembles Christian Theism, the same objections, if they possess any value at all, are equally valid against both. In considering this portion of our subject, I shall confine my observations to that class of objections which, owing to their apparent plausibility, are likely to exert an influence over those who have not made either philosophy or

science a subject of special study. These are for the most part based on considerations arising out of the present constitution of Nature and of man.

But before I attempt to deal with them, I must ask the reader's attention to the following most important consideration, which is far too generally overlooked. The objections in question leave the conclusions arrived at in the previous chapters entirely untouched. Those who urge them make no attempt to prove that they are invalid. Thus, the argument from causation —an argument resting on one of the most certain of our intuitions—proves that the universe in its present form is not self-existent ; but, however remote its origin may have been during the ages of the past, that its existence must have been due to the will of a being possessed of power and wisdom adequate to its production. Against this, the allegation that the world contains a vast amount of suffering falls powerless. The argument, from its numberless adjustments, adaptations, and correlations, the existence of which is not even disputed by the anti-Theist, proves that they cannot have been the result of the hap-hazard interaction of blind atoms and unintelligent forces but that they must have been brought about by the energy of a being, to whose power and intelligence it is impossible to assign limitations. The strength of this argument is so overwhelming, that it is impossible to set it aside by the allegation that there are a limited number of apparent imperfections

in the structure of animal bodies, or that the amount of suffering which exists proves that it cannot have been the work of an intelligent, and benevolent Creator. The argument from the moral nature of man proves from facts, the existence of which is undeniable, that it is incredible that it can have originated from the interaction of atoms and forces which are totally devoid of the elements of a moral nature; but that it must have owed its origin to a being in whom a moral nature is inherent and uncaused, and to whom conscience points as the centre of moral obligation; in a word that unmoral atoms and forces can never by any possible combination produce out of themselves that which was never in them. These proofs stand by themselves on wholly independent grounds, and it is impossible that they can be invalidated by a limited number of supposed imperfections in the structure of men or animals, or by the existence of physical or moral evil in the world in which we live. Even if they admitted of no explanation, the utmost that they would prove would be that there are limitations to the power, wisdom, or benevolence of the Creator; not that the universe has been brought into existence by the interaction of blind atoms and unintelligent forces. But when we consider its inconceivable vastness, and that the limitation of our faculties renders us incapable of fully grasping the creative plan, or the ultimate results which it is destined to produce, the inference

would be far more in conformity with reason, that, with an enlargement of our knowledge of the creative plan and of the moral government of the world, all things will be ultimately found to be in harmony with the possession of boundless power and wisdom, and perfect holiness and benevolence on the part of the Creator. In considering this subject, we must never allow ourselves to forget that the world in which we live, compared with the vastness, may I not rather say the infinitude, of the universe is no larger than a grain of sand on the ocean's shore ; and consequently that it is impossible that our finite powers can form an adequate estimate of the results which things which may seem to us imperfect, are in the course of the ages of the future calculated to produce.

The popular objections against Christian Theism assume a great variety of forms, which in a work like the present it is impossible to deal with in detail ; but, numerous as they are, they resolve themselves into two great principles : namely, the presence of physical and moral evil in a world which Christian Theism affirms to have been created by a being who is almighty and all-wise and, at the same time, perfect in holiness and benevolence. In endeavouring to meet these objections, it would seem the most simple course to adopt to treat them under the two distinct heads of Physical evil and Moral evil, but this is rendered difficult, if not impossible, owing to

the fact that by far the larger amount of physical evil originates in moral causes, which, if the latter ceased to act, would speedily disappear. I shall, therefore, be unable to keep the one subject entirely separate from the other; but as the widespread existence of moral evil in the world not only forms the strength of the anti-theistic position, but has formed the severest trial to the faith of good and holy men in every age, I propose to consider the reasons why it is permitted to exist, and the purposes which its existence is designed to subserve, in a chapter by itself.

The objections against the existence of a God, who possesses the character and attributes which Christian Theism attributes to Him, on account of the vast amount of evil with which this world abounds, may be compressed under the following heads—

1. That it proves that this world cannot be the work of a being who is possessed of boundless power and wisdom, and whose benevolence is perfect.

2. That if a creator exists, he must be deficient either in power, wisdom, or goodness.

3. That an antagonistic principle must exist somewhere, which he was unable to subdue, which has marred the perfection of the Creator's work. This objection assumes two forms. One which lays down that a tendency to evil is inherent in matter, which has an existence independent of the Creator's will, and which tendency he was unable to overcome;

another, which postulates the existence of two gods, one good, and another evil, who have ever been at war with one another; and although the latter is inferior in power to the former, and will be ultimately vanquished by him, he has succeeded in introducing into the world all the imperfections, the sins, and the suffering with which it abounds.

4. That the imperfections in the structure of certain animal races, especially of man, and the fact that diseases are transmissible from ancestors to their descendants, prove that they cannot have been the work of a Creator whose intelligence and benevolence are perfect.

The theory of Dualism has been effectually disposed of by modern science as affording a rational account of the existence of evil. It has proved beyond controversy that the universe is a unity, and that it is impossible that it can have been the production of two opposing wills; for not only does it present a unity of plan, nor does its structure contain a trace of the presence of two opposing forces, but the same instrumentality which produces pleasure under altered conditions produces pain; and its destructive forces are inherent in its constitution, and are regulated by the same laws as those which produce the happiness and the comfort of sentient beings. It is, therefore, not too much to affirm that no well-informed person will now take refuge from the difficulties in question in the theory that the physical

and moral evil in the world have originated in the action of two opposing wills, as affording a rational account of the origin of evil, however plausible such a theory may have seemed when the great truths brought to light by modern science were unknown.

But the extent in which evil exists in the world has formed a great stumbling-block in the way of thoughtful men in every age, especially among Orientals, and, to speak generally, among that order of mind which seeks a solution of difficulties in theorizing rather than in a careful study of the facts of Nature. Pressed by the difficulties in question, some of the greatest thinkers of the Oriental world have sought an escape from them by taking refuge in some one of the various forms of Pantheism. As its nominal adherents are more numerous than those of any single religion in the world, it will be necessary to offer a few observations on it, for the purpose of showing that pantheistic systems of thought utterly fail to solve the difficulties in question. My observations on them must be brief.

Pantheism assumes two aspects—

First : One which identifies the universe with God, and God with the universe. This may be designated Pantheism pure and simple ; and is really, except in name, indistinguishable from Atheism.

Second : One which lays down that this imperfect

world is not a direct emanation from the Supreme God, but that it is the work of a being who is a very distant emanation from Him; who, owing to the remoteness of his emanation from the Supreme God had become the subject of numerous imperfections. By this means it has been sought to free the Supreme God from the responsibility of being the author of evil. The utter inadequacy of such a system of thought to grapple with the difficulties in question I have already pointed out, and therefore I need not further discuss it.

But with respect to Pantheism generally, the being which the Pantheist designates God is impersonal, destitute of volition, free agency, the power of choice, or a single attribute which we designate moral. He is as much a necessary agent as blind matter, and unintelligent force. He is, therefore, incapable of inspiring a feeling of adoration, love, or duty due to him. In a word, Pantheism, as affording a rational account of the origin of things, is involved in all the difficulties which we have been considering in the previous chapters, and affords not the smallest solution of them. The universe being God, it fails to offer any explanation of how physical and moral evil have got into it, except on the assumption that, in some form or other, it was originally inherent in it, or that it has originated in separate conscious existence; and the only relief which it offers from its burden is ultimate absorption into the all of

things, in which personal consciousness will cease, and from which it was a calamity that it ever became separated. To obtain this re-absorption is the great end of human life. Surely, a system which teaches that the only mode of complete escape from the evil with which the world abounds is the cessation of our separate conscious existence; and which at the same time teaches that the all of things, of which man forms a portion, is God, wholly fails to give an account of the origin of either physical or moral evil which will satisfy our reason.

I will now pass on to the consideration of the objection that the mass of evil, with which the world abounds, proves that its Creator, if there be one, is not almighty, but imperfect either in power, wisdom, or goodness; and, therefore, that he was unable to create a better world than that in which we live; and with respect to which a class of unbelievers, known by the name of Pessimists, have gone the length of affirming that a worse one could not have been brought into existence; and that it would have been good for mankind, taken as a whole, if they had never been born.

It has been urged by an eminent writer whose works have attained a wide circulation in the higher regions of thought, that all that can be inferred from the existence of the universe is, that it is the work of a being who possessed a power adequate to its formation, but that this is far from proving that

his power is almighty. Into any abstract discussion of what infinite power is capable of effecting, I shall not enter, because I think that my readers will be of opinion that the being who could create the systems of suns which astronomers tell us are scattered throughout space in numbers passing human comprehension; our sun with its attendant planets, with everything which they contain, uphold them in being, and carry on their operations, is for all practical purposes justly designated almighty; and that the power that could effect all these wonders transcends all our ideas of limitations. Whether such a power could have created a better world than that in which we live is, in our ignorance of world-building, an idle speculation. It is related of a Spanish king, who knew only the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, that he said if he had been of the Creator's counsel, he would have advised Him how to have constructed the solar system better; but subsequent discoveries have shown that the objection was due to the objector's ignorance, and not to imperfections in its actual structure. On similar principles, we are entitled to argue that supposed imperfections in the Creator's work will hereafter be found to be due, not to imperfections in the work itself, but to our ignorance of what that work actually is, and our inability to contemplate it taken as a whole. It ought never to be forgotten in this controversy that all things which are conceivable

are not possible; for we freely concede to the objector that Almighty power cannot work contradictions; and that when He has conditioned the limits of His own working, as He must have done when He determined to create finite beings, that He cannot transcend the limits which He Himself has assigned to it without contradicting His own purposes. Moral and physical evil, pain and suffering, therefore, exist in the world, not because its Creator is deficient in power, but because their permitted existence formed a portion of His creative plan, which embraced the past, the present, and the future, boundless space, and boundless duration. The inconceivable vastness of the universe may full well make anti-theistic speculators on the best mode of world-building doubtful, whether if their advice had been taken in its construction they would have produced one more perfect. Whether a world would have been a better one in which the existence of suffering and moral evil had been rendered impossible, I shall have more to say in the next chapter.

The following objections, which are independent of moral considerations, now require our attention:

1. That the fact that diseases should be capable of transmission from ancestors to their descendants, and the imperfections which exist in the structure of organized beings as, for example, in persons

born blind, deaf, dumb, lame, destitute of intellect, with tendencies to insanity, and various forms of disease, prove that beings in which such things exist cannot have been the work of one whose power is devoid of limitations, and whose wisdom and benevolence are perfect.

2. That the action of the forces of Nature, remorselessly crushing, as they do, everything which comes across their path, are inconsistent with the idea that their Author is one who possesses the attributes which Christian Theism attributes to Him.

3. That the existence in animals of rudimentary organs, and of organs which have no present use, deprives the argument from adaptation of any argumentative value as affording proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator, it being inconceivable, as it is alleged, that rudimentary or useless organs can have been the work of one whose wisdom is devoid of limitations, whereas their existence is fully accounted for by the anti-theistic theory of evolution.

4. That if the author of Nature had been all-powerful, wise, and perfectly benevolent, he would have so constituted the world as to have prevented sentient beings from being subject to pain and suffering; or if their existence is in any sense necessary, that he would have greatly diminished their amount.

5. That the miseries of existence are so great as to render it doubtful whether it would not have been better if sentient beings, above all man, whose high organization renders him especially obnoxious to suffering, had never been brought into being; and afford proof that the Creator is either deficient in power to have made things otherwise than they are, or in benevolence; or that he is indifferent to the happiness of his creatures.

I fully admit that the first of these objections is founded on difficulties which are real. Why the Creator has made mental and bodily qualities transmissible from ancestors to their descendants; why men are born with the various defects above enumerated, and with inherited tendencies for which they are not responsible; I may add, why the vast inequalities in the condition of things into which men are born exist; why one man is endowed with a lofty intellect, and another with a mean capacity; why one is born rich, and another poor; and numerous other questions of a similar character,—are problems of which our finite intellects are unable to give the solution. Before that will be possible, we must be capable of entering the council chamber of the Most High, and scan from end to end His creative and providential plan, which embraces alike the ages of the past, the present, and the future, and those worlds which, in numbers

inconceivable by man, are scattered throughout the infinitude of space. Is it not credible, I ask, rather, is it not highly rational, that there should be difficulties into, which the intellect of man cannot penetrate, in the creative plan and in the providential government of a universe, compared with the vastness of which the world in which we live, and all that it contains, is less than a grain of sand on the ocean's shore; and in which there must be things for the existence of which it is unable to assign the reason, but which may be readily soluble to higher powers of intellect and a larger grasp of the plan of the Creator? One thing is certain, no effort of the intellect of man has succeeded in penetrating the reason why such things exist, nor has it pleased God to tell us by a revelation. All that our Lord did, when He was asked if a beggar was born blind on account of a sin committed by his parents or himself, was to deny that either was the reason, and to add that he was so born "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." This being so, I shall not attempt to unravel that which He, when questioned on, declined to explain; and I shall only observe that the existence of difficulties, comparatively few in number, in the creative plan and in the providential government of a universe so inconceivably vast, is unable to nullify the overwhelming evidence which it furnishes of the existence of a God possessed of the attributes which

Christian Theism attributes to Him, as set forth in the previous chapters.

2. The second objection, which has been founded on the fact that the forces of Nature remorselessly crush everything which comes across their path, can be disposed of without difficulty. The objection has been strongly put by the late Mr. J. S. Mill. He tells us that Nature (*i.e.* its necessary forces) perpetrates acts every day which, if committed by man, human justice would punish as atrocious crimes; and, therefore, that it affords no proof of the existence of an author whose justice and benevolence are perfect. The fact that the forces of the universe act in conformity with a law from which they never vary, and, therefore, that they remorselessly crush whatever comes in their way, is undoubted. Equally certain is it, according to the principles of Christian Theism, or of any Theism, which does not assume their existence independent of a Creator, that they are expressions of his will. Why, then, has he so constituted them as to produce results like these? The answer is an obvious one. Unless they thus acted, the entire course of human life would become a scene of hopeless confusion. What, then, is the demand which the objection before us makes on the Creator? Either that He should have so constituted them as to have made them capable of exercising discrimination, and thus have rendered their action variable and uncertain; or that

He should directly interfere with their activity by interpositions whenever their action is likely to prove injurious. I need hardly observe that such interpositions, in order that they may be effectual for the end proposed, must be of such frequent occurrence as to deprive their action of all certainty, and thereby render the future incapable of calculation ; a condition of things, be it observed, which is one of the chief objections which unbelievers urge against the belief in the miracles which are recorded in the Bible. Whether the rendering the forces of Nature uncertain in the mode of their action, and thereby throwing the whole course of human life into confusion, would be an improvement on the present order of things, let the reader judge. For example : Would it, I ask, be wise to suspend the force of gravitation every time when its action is in danger of causing suffering, or the destruction of human life ? If the forces of Nature were rendered variable in their action, would human life be possible ?

3. The next objection which we have to consider is that derived from the existence in animals of rudimentary, worn-out, and what are supposed to be useless, organs. It is urged that their presence is inconsistent with the belief that they can have originated in the action of a being possessed of a high order of intelligence, because we should unhesitatingly affirm that one who possessed no higher

degree of intelligence than an ordinary man, who introduced things into his constructions which are devoid of use, was little better than a blunderer; whereas, if in accordance with the anti-theistic theory of evolution the progress of things has been from imperfect to more perfect types of being without the intervention of intelligence, the presence of rudimentary, aborted, and even useless organs is readily accounted for, for blind matter and law may be readily excused for making a few blunders.

To this last explanation I reply, Undoubtedly. But I would ask the reader to consider whether it is reasonable to believe that, during the course of their blind activity during the ages of the past, they must not have made infinitely more, or whether it is believable that they have produced a single complicated orderly arrangement, not to speak of the innumerable adjustments, adaptations, and correlations, with which the universe everywhere abounds? Further: It remains yet to be proved that certain supposed useless organs are really devoid of use. Mistakes have been made on this subject in former times. All that can be truly said is that their uses have not yet been discovered. Several eminent scientists have recently expressed strong doubts whether any organ exists which is really destitute of use.

But with respect to the main point of the

objection, the existence in animals of rudimentary and aborted organs, I must once more ask the reader to bear in mind that Christian Theism is not committed to any theory as to the mode in which the Creator has operated in the production of His works. Respecting the mode of His operation, by which He brought into existence the constituents of the universe in their primeval form, we know, or can know, nothing. The determination of the order in which it has been produced is one which pertains, not to theology, but to science; but as to the *modus operandi* by which He has produced the various orders of beings—or to use language to which anti-Theists can take no just exception, "they have been produced"—neither theology nor science can determine anything for certain. All that science can effect is to render one mode of His action more probable than another; but as to the actual mode in which He has energized in bringing finite beings into existence, both must confess their ignorance. There is nothing inconsistent, therefore, in a theory of evolution which affirms that God, acting from within, through the agency of what we designate growth, and from without, by which at the right time and place He provides the materials necessary for growth, with a cordial acceptance of Christian Theism. All that it demands is, that behind the forces (be they what they may) by which the various orders of beings have been brought into existence, there should

be a God, all-powerful, and all-wise, who, whether He acts within these forces or without, is energizing through them, directing and controlling them, and working out through them the purposes of His creative and providential will.

As far then as the belief in Christian Theism is concerned, what does the objection which we are considering actually amount to? I answer, Nothing. Every rational Theist is firmly persuaded that the Creator has acted on a definite plan in His creative work. This being so, it follows that He has acted on a definite plan in the formation of animal structures. It has also, I think, been fully proved that He has begun with bringing into existence the lower forms of life; and by the energy of His power, exerted from within or without, or in both ways (it matters not which), He has evolved a succession of higher and higher ones. Assuming, then, that He has acted on a definite plan, is it any proof of lack of wisdom, that He should have created in embryo in the lower animal structures everything which now exists in a completed form in the highest orders of animal life?

Let me illustrate my position by an example. The fore feet of numerous animals contain in embryo and in type the various bones which in their perfected form constitute those of the human hand. In many other respects the structure of the

lower forms of animal life may be said to be prophetic of the higher, until they receive their fulfilment (*i.e.* the complete realization of the idea which underlies them) in the highest.

What objection, I ask, can be justly urged against either the power or the wisdom of the Creator, if He has begun by forming animal structures on a definite plan, in embryo and in type, and has gradually improved them through a course of working carried on through a succession of ages, until they have realized the idea involved in their original conception? Why, I ask, may not the Creative Power energize both from within and from without: from within, in the form which we designate growth; and from without, in providing the materials necessary for growth, and causing them to meet at the time and place where they are required? Is such a mode of action any objection against His power or His wisdom? The objection would only be valid on the assumption that each order of beings was a separate creative act, perfect from the first in all its parts. On the contrary, the formation of a definite plan embracing within its wide compass every order of beings possessed of life, proves that the being who conceived it, and who has ultimately realized the idea which underlay it in the formation of the human body, must have been possessed of a power and intelligence to which we can assign no limits; and His continuing to carry it out through long

ages that He must have possessed not intelligence only, but purpose and volition. With respect to organs, which were useful once, but are no longer useful now, I ask, is it a proof of lack of wisdom, if, instead of removing every trace of their former existence from the higher forms of life by some special intervention,—a course of action especially objectionable to anti-Theists,—He has allowed them to remain in their present condition as memorials of the past?

4. Let us now consider the next objection, which is founded on the vast amount of pain and suffering with which the world abounds. From its existence it is urged that if there is a Creator, all-powerful, wise, and perfectly benevolent, He would have prevented its existence altogether, or have greatly limited its amount.

My observations on this point will be brief, because as a large portion of the pain and suffering which exists originates in moral causes, the subject will more suitably come under notice in the next chapter. In this place it will be sufficient to observe that it is in the highest degree probable, if not absolutely certain, that it is a necessary condition of the creation of beings who are capable of receiving pleasure through a bodily organization, such as a nervous system, that it must involve the necessity of their being capable of suffering pain; or, in other words, what the objection affirms, that which the

Creator ought to have done involves a contradiction. Further: It is an undoubted fact that pain has its uses—uses so important that its existence is consistent with the most benevolent purpose on the part of the Creator—among which I may notice here that it acts as a warning against consequences which might otherwise be attended with the most dangerous results to the well-being of mankind. How far its amount admits of diminution is a question on which our finite intellects are incapable of forming a judgment.

5. We now come to the objection which is urged against the benevolence of the Creator; or, at least, that he is indifferent to the happiness of his creatures on the ground that the present condition of animal and human life is attended with results which prove that the Creator, if there be one—for it is the effect of these objections as they are urged by anti-theistic writers and lecturers to convey the impression that there is none—is either deficient in power to have made things otherwise than they are, or of benevolent purpose in his creative acts. The objection really raises the question, whether from the phenomena of animal and human life we are justified in inferring that its author is perfectly, or only partially benevolent, or indifferent to the happiness of sentient beings, or whether their author is blind matter and necessary force, both destitute of a single element which can be designated moral.

Not a few of those who have embraced the gloomy view of things which the last alternative suggests have adopted the doctrine known by the name of Pessimism, the meaning of which is that, as things are at present constituted, life is not worth having, and that the present order of things ought to be subverted as unbearable, cost what its subversion may. I will offer a few remarks on this last position first, but in doing so I shall avoid referring to it in its political aspect.

There can be little doubt, if the question were put to every hundred thousand of mankind: Do you think that life, *taken as a whole*, is a scene of enjoyment, and therefore desirable? that ninety-nine thousand out of each hundred thousand would certainly answer the question in the affirmative. This surely is a sufficient reply to those who adopt the theory in question. They arrive at this conclusion by contemplating one aspect of it, and by shutting their eyes to every other. I fully admit that human existence, especially towards its close, is not unfrequently clouded with no inconsiderable amount of sorrow and suffering; but it is a fact to the truth of which the testimony is overwhelming, that the happiness of life, taken as a whole, stands in an overwhelming ratio greater than its sufferings. I say *taken as a whole*, and I would add, irrespective of the moral causes by which suffering is produced, because we have no right to fix our

exclusive attention on some of its darker aspects, and thereon to erect a theory of human life, and affirm that it is inconsistent with the existence of a benevolent author. I by no means wish to deny that there are individual cases of protracted, I may say lifelong, suffering, in which the sufferer, if he confines his view to this life only, may be justified in invoking death as a release; but such cases are comparatively rare. It will be only necessary to observe that if it is true that human existence is a scene of misery, such as this theory presupposes, and that man perishes with his body, suicide would be its logical conclusion; and the best thing which could happen would be the painless passing of the human race into non-existence. But the Pessimist does not act on his theory; he only grumbles, or commits some crime attended with danger, from the consequences of which he does his utmost to escape. It is true that certain philosophers of two widely different schools sought refuge in suicide from the tyranny of the early Roman imperial government; that others in obedience to imperial orders, did the same that they might escape from a more terrible fate; and that during this period suicides were frequent in the less cultivated ranks of life, as a means of escape from a state of things which was deemed intolerable; and that even the luxurious spendthrift, who had squandered his means of subsistence, and who,

therefore, could no longer indulge in his former courses, adopted this as his last refuge. But all this arose, not from evils which are inherent in the constitution of things, but from those which are of man's creating, and within his power to remedy. Suicides at this period, like many other abnormal things in human nature, were a kind of temporary rage, the reasons for which subsequent experience has refused to endorse. It is also true that the fundamental principle of Buddhism (a system—it can hardly be called a religion in the original form in which it was propounded by its author) is, that life is so bad and miserable that the sooner our separate conscious existence is absorbed in the mighty "All," the better. This, like many other theories that have been propounded, by concentrating attention on one aspect of the question, namely, the suffering with which the theorizer has come in contact, and excluding from his view the other, namely, the far greater amount of the indications of happiness and enjoyment, which is presented by the phenomena of conscious existence; contradicts the general experience of mankind, which, on such a subject as whether life is desirable or the reverse, is the only adequate test of truth. But the practice of the overwhelming majority of its adherents, as well as that of the professed followers of every system founded on similar principles, proves that they are of opinion that conscious

existence is a thing to be desired. I shall, therefore, only observe that theories which are practically false must be theoretically untrue; and therefore that all theories which affirm that the miseries of life are so great that it would have been better if man had never been brought into existence are untenable.

Let us now consider the question whether the phenomena of sentient life, taken as a whole, and our own individual experience of it, indicate a benevolent purpose in the Creator, or that He is indifferent to the happiness of His creatures. I say "taken as a whole," because no theory can be true which is based on partial views of it, or if we fix our exclusive attention on particular aspects of it. What, then, is the inference which the phenomena of life suggest? It is necessary to consider this subject carefully, because so thoughtful a writer as Professor Huxley speaks in a recent article on "The Struggle for Existence," of the myriads of generations of herbivorous animals which have been tormented and devoured by carnivorous ones; of both alike being subject to all the miseries incidental to old age, disease, and over-multiplication, and of the more or less suffering which is the meed both of the vanquished and victor; and he concludes that "some thousands of times a minute, *were our ears sharp enough*" [the italics are mine] "we should hear sighs and groans of pain like those heard by Dante at

the gate of hell, that the world cannot be governed by what we call benevolence." Few, I think, will consider this a correct statement of the phenomena presented by animal life. The following is my reply to it—

As all direct knowledge respecting the happiness or the misery of existence must be confined to ourselves, we can only judge whether beings, other than ourselves, are in a state of enjoyment or of suffering by comparing their actions with our own under similar circumstances. But although our judgments are founded on analogy, few will be found who will doubt their correctness. What, then, are we entitled to infer respecting the animal creation? Are their happiness and enjoyment out of all proportion greater than their sufferings; are they equally balanced; or do their sufferings preponderate? On this point no careful observer can entertain a doubt. Do not the phenomena of insect life, when we see its innumerable hosts on the wing during the summer evenings prove that they are experiencing sensations of pleasure? Is not the same true of the feathered races, and of the innumerable shoals of fish which gambol in the ocean, and of the different land animals when they are partaking of their food? Who can doubt that the domestic cat, when we hear it purring, or see it stretching itself in the heat; or that the dog, when following its natural instincts, such as hunting, or

when he is engaged in the service of his master, is happy? The same is true of every animal in its various gambols, when acting on its instincts, or reclining at its ease. I think that few who have contemplated the innumerable forms of sentient life, will entertain a doubt, that the life of animals is one which, with few exceptions, is a life of pleasure. In many cases it may be short, but as long as it lasts, every indication by which we are able to form a judgment, proves that it is pleasurable. The chief exceptions are the sufferings which man inflicts on those which are subject to his rule. The diseases to which they are exposed are few; and for the most part, as far as we can judge, are not attended with acute pain. From two things which intensify human suffering they are certainly exempt. Animals are incapable of reflex action. Man possesses that power, and by concentrating his attention on a pain, intensifies it. The sufferings of man are multiplied by the power which he possesses of anticipating the future. This power animals have not. Whatever pains they feel, even death, come upon them suddenly, without the suffering which arises from anticipation. If they are subject to death, this is the means by which a far greater number than would otherwise be possible, are rendered capable of the enjoyments of life; for, if there was no death the world would be speedily over-peopled.

It will doubtless be objected that a large majority of animals live by preying on one another, and that it was the intention of the author of Nature that they should do so; for he has provided not a few of them with a highly complicated machinery for the purpose of enabling them to catch their prey, and with an intelligence adequate to contrive the means of alluring it into their power. It is impossible for us to estimate the exact amount of suffering which this may occasion. All that we know for certain is, that it comes suddenly and without fearful anticipation; but of the precise amount of pain with which the extinction of life in this manner is attended we have no means of judging, for scarcely has a human being escaped from the deadly grasp of the more powerful predaceous animals to tell the tale. But if Livingstone's experience be not a singular one, he tells us that when he was seized by a lion his sense of feeling and of fear was all but paralyzed. If this be true in all similar cases, it is certainly a merciful provision of the Creator. These inferences are further strengthened by the fact that no organism with which we are acquainted has been framed for the infliction of pain as its immediate object. Many members of the animal creation, it is true, are provided with organisms of a destructive character, and frequently with very elaborate ones; but their use, and, if it may be permitted to use the word their intention, is not to inflict pain, but to procure

for their possessors the needful supply of food, or with the means of self-defence.

If, then, we take a general view of animal life, and at the same time take into account that the number of living beings which exist is past all human comprehension; and that each of them in its respective sphere shows unquestionable signs of enjoyment; the conclusion is inevitable that the amount of happiness which they experience is not only inconceivably vast in quantity, but that it indefinitely transcends the pains which they suffer. If Professor Huxley's ears were sharpened up to the point which he postulates, it is certain that he would find that the sounds emitted by animals which are indicative of enjoyment would be so loud as to drown those which are indicative of pain; and that the groans and sighs of pain which are emitted by animals, like those which Dante supposed that he heard at the gate of hell, are as much the creation of his own imagination as the latter were of the imagination of the poet. Such being the indications of almost uninterrupted enjoyment which are afforded by the phenomena of animal life, they prove that the purpose of the Creator in bringing them into existence was benevolent; and, consequently, that those cases which seem to point to the conclusion that He is indifferent to the happiness of His creatures must admit of some other explanation.

Let us now take a brief survey of human life.

Does it indicate the presence of benevolent purpose, or would it have been better, as some have ventured to affirm, if man had never been brought into existence? In considering this subject, I must for the present omit a consideration which, if taken into account, would alter the complexion of the entire question, namely: Does a future state of existence await man, the enjoyments of which may fully compensate for the sufferings of the present life? On this question—one of great importance in relation to the present controversy—I will offer a few observations in the concluding chapter of this work. I must also ask the reader to exclude from his view the popular and widespread doctrine of everlasting damnation. This, if it is true, certainly involves the consequence that it would have been good for the overwhelming majority of mankind if they had never been born. In this place I must confine myself to the question whether human life, as we behold it, taken as a whole, does or does not testify to the benevolence of its author. Let it also be remembered that that vast mass of suffering which originates in moral causes is excluded from our present inquiry.

When we contemplate human life, its phenomena prove beyond a doubt that, in its earlier stages, its pleasures greatly exceed its pains. This we know, not only from observation, but from our own recollection. This period of life knows little or nothing of care about the future. Its wants are supplied, not by

its own exertions, but by those of others. The restraints which it is necessary to impose on its desires with a view to its future good may be irksome, but are certainly not painful. Its voluntary activities—and they are many—are attended with pleasurable sensations. The period of childhood, with a few rare exceptions, is universally acknowledged to be one of enjoyment. This is not only the case with those born in comfortable circumstances; it is true of the great majority of mankind. Look, for example, at the ill-clad children in our streets. Observe them when at play; when they dance at the music of the organ-grinder; even when they struggle with one another, when contesting the palm of superior strength, and in other circumstances too numerous to particularize. One often wonders at witnessing the indications of happiness which they display. They doubtless have their discomforts; but who can doubt that their pleasures out of all proportion greatly preponderate over their pains? The same observations are true of early youth. If the question were put to everyone under twenty years of age: "Do you consider life a blessing?" I feel assured that the all but unanimous answer would be, "I do"—the only exceptions being those who from their earliest consciousness have suffered from painful congenital disease; and these are comparatively few. What, then, is the inference which these considerations

suggest? I answer whatever clouds and darkness may be round about Him, that the purpose of the Creator was a benevolent one, and that the experience of early life, taken as a whole, proves that life, with all its drawbacks, is a blessing.

Let us now direct our attention to mature life. What does our own experience of it, and that of others, testify as to the purpose of the Creator in His creative work? The anti-Theist urges us to contemplate its struggles, its disappointments, and its sufferings; and say whether such things are consistent with benevolent purpose. The Theist, on the other hand, justly calls on us not to fix our attention on one portion of the picture only, but to take into account the pleasures and the joys with which life abounds, and ask ourselves, as a matter of our own experience, whether they do not greatly preponderate over its pains. When, for example, a man has had experience of sixty years of life, does he wish that he had passed painlessly out of existence at an earlier period? or, after contemplating the past, is it his deliberate opinion that it would have been good for him if he had never been born? I fully believe, and know from experience, that life has its many trials and its sufferings; but what I ask the reader's particular attention to is, that the overwhelming majority of these owe their origin to moral causes. Such evils are either self-caused, or are caused by the action of other moral agents, and are

therefore remediable. In fact, if the Gospel of Christ were practically obeyed; if the golden rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," were carried out in religion, in politics, and in every department of social and private life; if ambition, love of power, self-love to the injury of others, envy, hatred, malice, and the innumerable petty trifles which disturb the happiness of life, were made to cease, the pain and misery occasioned by them would disappear.

If, then, we withdraw from our view that vast amount of suffering which originates in moral causes, is there anything in the phenomena of mature life which would lead us to question the general benevolence of the Creator? I say His "general benevolence," because I fully admit that there are numerous cases of pain and suffering arising from causes over which we can exert no control, of which it is impossible, with our limited knowledge, to assign a reason why they are permitted. The faculties with which we are endowed prove that a life of energetic action was destined to be the lot of man. Accordingly the Creator has attached pleasurable enjoyment to the active energy of every faculty which we possess, and that enjoyment only ceases when the energetic action is pressed beyond due limits, a pressure which often takes place, but which originates in causes over which we can exert control. Let each of us examine our experience of the past, and say whether our every exertion of mind and body—

and active life is full of exertion—when confined within due limits, has not been pleasurable. Does not a life of energy banish a whole array of evils to which a life of idleness is a prey? Will not the overwhelming majority of mankind testify that this has been their experience also? Let anyone who has attained to mature years calmly survey his past life, and ask himself whether, when he excludes from his estimate those sufferings over which he and others can exert control; and the various trifles, not worth a moment's consideration, which embitter the lives of thousands; the pleasures which have lain within his reach have not been out of all proportion greater than the pains which he has suffered? If so, this period of human life is desirable, and it is impossible that a limited number of apparent exceptions can outweigh the overwhelming evidence of benevolent purpose which it affords; but they must admit of an explanation which, if we could take a larger view of the Divine government than is at present open to our observation, would be found to be consistent with it.

We have now arrived at the concluding period of life, which we designate old age, with respect to which the saying of the Psalmist, if not universally, is for the most part, true: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore years, yet is their pride but labour and sorrow; for it is soon gone, and we fly

away." Far be it from me to say that this period of life is not attended with a considerable amount of happiness, especially when it is supported by bright prospects of a world beyond the grave in which sin and suffering will cease for evermore; but it is an unquestionable fact that those energies, which once were pleasurable, have with few exceptions become laborious. Not only is this so, but our bodies are so framed that, however long they may last under favourable conditions, they are destined ultimately to wear out; and death is the final result. Whether the act of dying, apart from the presence of disease, is painful it is impossible to say—probably it is not; but the decay of our bodies for the most part weakens our mental powers, and greatly diminishes, if not destroys, the enjoyment which in the days of our strength resulted from their exercise. Peaceful extinction is, I own, under ordinary circumstances, the favourable side of the picture. Death is frequently preceded by long, painful, and wasting disease; and in not a few cases with sufferings so acute that even the holiest of men have offered earnest prayer to God that He would grant them relief from their sufferings by death. Death also, at whatever period of life it may come, is usually preceded by painful disease. Such are the facts.

From these the anti-Theist argues that it is incredible that such a condition of things can be the work of a God who is all-powerful, wise, and good. Could

not such a being, if he exists, have so formed the human body, even if death were a necessary condition of his creative work, that it should be brought about with little or no suffering—at any rate, only with suffering which has been self-caused? How is it consistent with unlimited power and perfect goodness on the part of the Creator that the declining years of life should be, with such few exceptions, years of labour and sorrow? Is it not far more rational to believe that the state of things which actually exists has been brought about by the action of forces destitute of any attribute which we designate moral, than that it is the work of an all-powerful, wise, and benevolent Creator?

Such objections may appear plausible to those who contemplate only one side of human life, namely, its sorrows and its sufferings; but it is impossible that they can outweigh the overwhelming evidence which every form of sentient life affords, of the existence of a God who is all-powerful, wise, and good. Unless, then, our reasoning powers are unreliable, there must be some mode in which the existence of those things which appear to us to be evils, must be consistent with these attributes in the Creator. Surely, it is rational to believe that man with his limited faculties is unable to penetrate to the height, depth, and breadth of the plan of the Creator's working; but that this inability does not hinder us from forming a correct estimate of those

parts of it which are evident and clear. That work extends from the eternity of the past to the endless ages of the future; its sphere is boundless space. Who, then, can embrace it in all its bearings? That the existence of suffering which originates in other than moral causes has a purpose, we cannot doubt, though we cannot penetrate it here. I fully admit that if man perishes in the grave, the purpose which these sufferings subserve is inexplicable. It is only explicable in the light of a future state, when with an enlargement of our faculties and of our sphere of vision, that which is dark now may become clear hereafter. Until that day dawns, all that we can do is to exercise faith in that God who has filled the world with such innumerable proofs of His power, wisdom, and goodness, that He will do all things right; and when we contemplate what to us is inexplicable in the Divine government of the world, say with the Apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory" unto the ages of ages! Yes, truly, He has the ages of ages in which to work; and in them He can bring good out of apparent evil. Surely,

then, it is in the highest degree rational to have faith in Him who has filled the world with such innumerable manifestations of His power, His wisdom, and His goodness, that what at present seem to be blemishes in His creative and providential work will ultimately work out the purposes of His holy will

CHAPTER X.

THE OBJECTIONS WHICH ARE URGED AGAINST CHRISTIAN THEISM OWING TO THE EXISTENCE OF MORAL EVIL AND THE RESULTS WITH WHICH IT IS ATTENDED.

THERE can be no doubt that one of the greatest stumbling-blocks to ordinary people in the way of their accepting the teaching of Christianity respecting the character of God is the vast amount of moral evil which exists in the world, and the terrible consequences which, as far as we can at present discern, have resulted from it. I say "as far as we can at present discern," because it is obvious that we have no right to assume that these will be the ultimate ones which will be realized by its permitted existence under the moral government of God, which with a view to my present argument I am entitled to take for granted will not be limited to the brief space of man's continuance here. I fully admit that the difficulties are real, and that they have the appearance of considerable plausibility to those who have not given to this subject a careful

consideration. I propose, therefore, in the present chapter to consider the subject of moral evil, and the reasons why its existence is permitted, notwithstanding the results with which it has been attended. In doing so, it will be impossible to keep the subject of physical and moral evil entirely separate from one another, because it is unquestionable that by far the larger proportion of physical suffering owes its origin to moral causes, that is, to causes over which we ourselves can exert control, or which originate in the conduct of others, or in tendencies to evil transmitted from ancestors more or less remote. Few will question that the overwhelming mass of the misery from which man suffers is of his own creation, though we, as individuals, may not be responsible for its origination; and that not a little of it is the penalty which follows on the gratification of his evil appetites and passions, and suited to make him sensible of the evil of those unhallowed gratifications —one, therefore, which is deterrent and calculated to be remediable. There can be no doubt, if moral evil could be removed out of the world, the amount of suffering which originates in causes purely physical, would be reduced to dimensions which are comparatively small—at any rate small compared with the vast amount of enjoyment which, as I have proved in the last chapter, the phenomena of sentient life present.

I will now state succinctly the chief objections,

founded on the existence of moral evil and the amount of suffering which has resulted from it, which are urged by anti-Theists against the belief in the existence of a God who possesses the attributes which Christian Theism attributes to Him.

It is objected—

1. That it is incredible that a God who is all-powerful and all-good can have been the Creator of a world in which such a mass of moral evil and suffering contingent on it exists. Could he not, if he is almighty, have prevented it? and if he could, but has not, does it not prove, if a Creator exists, which is rendered more than doubtful, that he must be indifferent to the happiness of his creatures?

2. That even if the existence of moral evil is a necessary condition of the creation of a free agent, might he not have caused that the amount of sin and suffering should have been far less than it is? Is it not inconsistent with his holiness to allow moral evil to flourish as it does, without adopting some more effectual means of openly showing His disapprobation of it?

3. That inasmuch as every existing thing, whether it be the evil, or the good, is maintained in being by the energy of the Creator's will; his holiness and his goodness require, even if the possible existence of moral evil is a necessity, that he should withdraw from those beings in whom it has taken root that energy by which he upholds in existence all created

things, and thus cause everything which is evil to cease to be, and by this means prevent its indefinite multiplication. In a word, is not the suffering in the world which results from the existence of moral evil so vast, and its moral government so imperfect, as to prove, if a moral government exist at all, that it cannot be that of a being who is at the same time all-powerful, all-wise, all-holy, and all-good.

Such are the chief objections which are urged by anti-Theists on moral grounds, in a great variety of forms, against the existence of a Creator who possesses the attributes which Christian Theism attributes to Him, and which severely try the faith of not a few sincere believers. Before I proceed to consider them in greater detail, it will be desirable that I should offer a few general observations on them.

(i) The creation of a finite being must necessarily lie open to a considerable number of objections, because imperfection is inherent in the conception of the finite. Thus it is always possible that the most exalted finite being may think that it would have been better if it had been created higher and better still, and so on for evermore; for nothing can be perfect until the infinite is reached, which for a finite being is impossible. Consequently, if objections are urged against the existence of a God who possesses the attributes which Christian Theism attributes to

Him on account of supposed imperfections which we think that we can discern in finite beings, it really means that they ought never to have been created. For the same reason, it would have been impossible for the Creator to have created beings of different orders, some of which are possessed of higher and others of lower endowments, because each inferior one might object that His work was imperfect in that He has made it what it is, and not invested it with the attributes of one of a higher order. The only question open for consideration is: Has the Creator provided each order of beings which He has created, with the means of happiness and enjoyment within the sphere of the faculties with which He has been pleased to endow them? To this question I think that I have returned a sufficient answer in the last chapter.

(ii) It is important, in considering questions like the present, that it should be kept steadily in mind that the work of world-building, and the possibilities involved in it, is one which transcends the powers of human reason to determine what is possible, or the contrary. This is obvious, for it is one which lies outside the range of human experience; and whatever the theorizer may imagine, it is impossible to apply *a priori* principles to the work in question: for these uniformly fail in matters which come within our experience to conduct us to the realities of things; and if they are thus unreliable in the

case of things which come within our experience, how can they be reliable in things which transcend it? The discoveries of astronomy, to speak of no other science, have so disclosed the vastness of the universe as to make it evident that man's finite intellect is incapable of fathoming the height and depth, the length and breadth, of the Creator's plan, or to form a judgment, from the small portion of it which we behold, what will be its ultimate results. Surely, in view of its vastness, a less confident affirmation on the part of speculators as to how the creative plan might have been improved would not be unreasonable. A plan thus vast may be fully consistent with the temporary presence of evil which will be ultimately curable, or which will pass into non-existence when it has accomplished the work for which it has been permitted to exist, or with suffering which will hereafter be productive of greater good to the sufferer which could not be realized without it.

(iii) When the Creator formed the purpose of creating the finite, He must have assigned limits to the exertion of His own omnipotence, for it is evident that the exercise of His power must have been confined within the limits of His creative purpose, that purpose being the bringing into existence of that which, from the conditions of the case, involved the production of beings in whom various degrees of imperfection must have been inherent.

In other words, when He determined to create finite beings He entered into self-imposed conditions, and having judged these conditions to be wise and good, it is absurd to demand that He should violate them to meet our *a priori* speculations.

(iv) It has often been assumed, as though it were an axiom, that the work of a perfect Creator must be perfect, that is, have no conceivable imperfection in it. Perfect I allow it must be, as far as the creative purpose is concerned, and that that purpose is holy, just, and good; yet it by no means follows that this must be true of each creative act taken by itself, and without reference to the plan of which it forms a part. But of the nature of the instrumentality by which His purpose is capable of being realized we have no means of judging. But if we mean by perfect that every creative act, *taken by itself*, must realize our conception of absolute perfection, then it would have been impossible that the creative and providential plan could have been a work extending throughout the ages, gradually advancing from lower to higher forms of being, and that beings, some of which were gifted with higher, and others with lower endowments could have been brought into existence.

Who then, I ask, will venture to affirm that it would have been better if all rational beings had been made incapable of progress; or that the

present plan of creation, so vast as to exceed the powers of man to embrace it in its length, breadth, and depth, will not ultimately realize the highest purposes of holiness and benevolence? We, in our impatience, are apt to forget that the Creator has ages of ages in which to work, and that we may have ages of ages in which to exist, during which He can bring good out of apparent evil. That He can do so is certain, for I shall show presently that the existence of moral evil is a necessary condition of the existence of moral agents, and that their existence is a necessary condition of the production of the highest form of good. If beings possessed of freedom had not been brought into existence because their creation involved the possibility of the introduction of moral evil into the world—then, nothing but beings who could only act as they were compelled to act; nothing which could choose good because it is good, nothing which could render a voluntary service; nothing noble, nothing worthy of commendation, nothing pure, nothing lovely, no virtue, no self-sacrifice,—could have been brought into existence; but all agents would have been of the same dead level, incapable of a single elevated aspiration, or of a single affection which is spiritual or moral.

(v) One further consideration requires notice. If free agency did not exist (and without it the exercise of intellectual power would be impossible), man

would be incapable of exercising any command over the physical laws of Nature. Their action, when undirected by intelligent volition, as we see in the case of volcanoes, earthquakes, and other similar phenomena, is of a very destructive character. But as the blind forces of Nature can only act in conformity with invariable law, when the law of their activity is discovered, the mode in which most of them act at any particular time and place is capable of being made a subject of certain calculation. This being so, when our intellect informs us that their action will be either dangerous or destructive, our possession of the power of self-determination enables us to avoid crossing their path, or, by playing off one force against another, to avoid the danger which would result if their blind action was not interfered with by human agency. Man therefore, by the possession of this power, is able, within certain limits, to avert no small amount of the evil which would otherwise result from their uncontrolled activity. Further: It is the power of choosing between alternatives, united with the ability of concentrating our intellects on some particular subjects, and of withdrawing them from others, which enables man to compel the blind forces of Nature to execute the purposes of his will, and thus, instead of being his masters, to become his servants. All this would be impossible unless we were free, and not necessary agents; and, as I shall prove

presently, the possibility of the existence of moral evil, with all the consequences with which it is attended, is the necessary condition of the creation of a being who is a free, and not a necessary, agent. Will any rational being, I ask, when he considers the consequences which would be the result of filling the world with nothing but necessary agents, affirm that it would have been desirable that the Creator should have abstained from creating free agents, because H's doing so involved the possibility of the introduction of moral evil into the world, with the consequences with which it has been attended?

The above considerations are amply sufficient to make a thoughtful man pause, before he ventures to affirm that the amount of suffering which exists is sufficient to invalidate the overwhelming mass of evidence, with which the universe is everywhere loaded, that it is the work of an all-powerful, wise, and benevolent Creator. I will now proceed to consider the fundamental principle on which the anti-theistic objections rest, the question of moral evil generally, and inquire whether its permitted existence is not the necessary condition of the existence of everything above the dead level of necessary agency; or, in plain words, whether it is not the necessary condition of everything which is elevated, noble, just, pure, deserving of praise, and of everything which we understand by the

words, virtue, holiness, and benevolence. If this is so, and I think that the proof that it is so is overwhelming, then its permitted existence is a good—and if a good it is a proof of benevolent purpose in the Creator.

In considering this subject, I shall assume that I have proved, in chapter viii. of this work, that free agency, in the sense in which we commonly use that term, is not a mere disguised form of necessary agency, as anti-Theists would endeavour to persuade us; but a thing which actually exists, account for its origin as we may; and that all their attempts to disprove its existence, or to explain it away, contradict the most certain intuitions of our consciousness. I shall, therefore, enter into no abstract questions about its origin, but I shall base my reasonings on *its existence as a fact*, the existence of which is not only testified to by our consciousness as individuals, but by the universal experience of mankind. The question, therefore, which we have to consider is, whether it is consistent with holiness and benevolent purpose in the Creator, to have created beings who are endowed with the power of choosing among different incentives to action which of them they will follow, subject to the condition of rendering the existence of moral evil possible. In investigating this subject let me remind the reader that although the objections of anti-Theists assume a variety of forms, all that is

really salient in them may be expressed in two simple sentences—

1. If God is almighty, all-holy, and benevolent, and if sin and moral evil are hateful to Him, why has He not so constructed the world as to have rendered the intrusion of moral evil into it, with all its terrible consequences, impossible?

2. Inasmuch as nothing is too hard for omnipotence to effect, it is inconceivable that a God exists, who permits the continued existence of wills which are antagonistic to His own.

To these objections, at first sight so plausible, I answer, that it is possible for beings, even with our finite intellects, to conceive of things which it is impossible even for omnipotence to effect. As this is a point of the utmost importance in relation to our present argument, I must adduce a few obvious examples of such limitations. Thus, things being conditioned as they are, it is impossible even for omnipotence to make two straight lines which shall enclose a space; or a triangle, whose three angles shall not be equal to two right angles; or one, the two sides of which shall not be greater than its third side; or to cause that things which are equal to the same thing, should not be equal to one another; or that two and two should make five and not four, or that an event which is past should never have existed.

In a word, it is no limitation to almighty power

to affirm that it cannot work contradictions, and such things, and numerous others, involve contradictions. All that we mean when we attribute almighty power to God is, that He can do all things which are possible. Now the suggestion that it is possible to create a being who is free to choose the good, and who is not at the same time free to choose the evil, involves a direct contradiction; for the conception of free agency involves the possession of a power of choosing between a number of alternatives; but where a being can only act under compulsion, or because it cannot act otherwise, there can be no choice, and a being who is impelled to choose the good only, and who cannot choose evil, that is, who can only act in conformity with what has been incorrectly called the strongest motive, is no more a free agent than the force of gravitation. There can be no doubt that it was within the power of the Creator to have rendered the existence of moral evil impossible; but this could only have been effected by His declining to create a moral being, that is, by His being satisfied with the services of beings which could not do otherwise than serve Him; who could not do His will because it is right to do it; who were incapable of feeling an affection towards Him who made them, of progress, or of obedience to a moral law.

Let us consider, then, what would have been the consequence, if the existence of moral evil had

been rendered impossible. The world would have contained nothing but necessary agents, or, at best, of agents possessing no greater amount of intelligence, or freedom, than that of the most intelligent of animals, whose intellect and freedom of choice is evidently confined within limits so narrow that, if left to themselves, and not interfered with by a higher order of being, they would be utterly unprogressive, and continue precisely the same as they were when they were first brought into existence; and if, as it is said, some of them possess the rudiments of a moral nature, it would continue undeveloped. Everything, therefore, in man which places him at the elevation which he occupies above the most intelligent of animals—an elevation so great that it is impossible to assign its limits—would have been non-existent. To put the distinction briefly: Man is capable of indefinite progress, both intellectually and morally; the noblest animals if left to themselves would continue for ever stagnant; and even that progress which some of them are capable of making, under the hand of man, is confined within limits so narrow, that they still continue, irresponsible for their actions; or, in other words, no amount of education or training will convert the most intelligent of animals into a moral being.

As this is a point of considerable importance in relation to our argument, let me illustrate it by two familiar examples—one which is capable of making

a very limited progress when brought under the teaching of man, of whom he is the constant companion; and the other which is capable of performing operations which, if the result of an intelligence possessed by itself, would involve intelligence of a high order, but which remains utterly unprogressive.

The intelligence displayed by the dog within certain limits is great, but within these limits it is strictly confined. He may even be said to possess some rudiments of a moral nature; but these again are confined within such narrow boundaries that we never think of holding him responsible for his actions. He is capable of learning things under man's teaching which he never could have learned by his own unaided powers. That he possesses reasoning powers, not of universal application, but confined within certain narrow limits which he is unable to transcend, seems unquestionable. His devotion to his master is striking. Even when he beats him, he fawns submissively at his feet. He is capable of sacrificing himself for him, and even of pining away at his death. But he will serve with equal faithfulness the greatest saint and the greatest monster of iniquity. He is governed by his impulses; he is unable to discriminate between right and wrong. Notwithstanding all his devotion to his master, he cannot offer himself as a sacrifice either to him or to any other being because it is holy, just, and right that he should do

so. His acts of this kind are not the result of choice, but of impulse. With all his intelligence he has never given an intelligent glance at the mighty heavens, though he bays at the moon. Surely no rational being would sacrifice the powers with which his free agency invests him at the cost of being reduced to a level of those of the dog, the horse, or the elephant.

Let us now take another example from the working bee. Wonderful are its operations. In the formation of its cells, it has solved a difficult mathematical problem thousands of years before it was solved by man. In the construction of its combs, it is capable of deviating from their usual form, so as to meet certain emergencies arising from the nature of its abode. By its incessant labours it provides a store of provisions against a season when it can procure none. When by some untimely accident the hive has been deprived of its queen, it is capable of manufacturing a new one out of a grub which in ordinary course would produce a worker. If these and other operations involved on its part intellect or choice similar to that possessed by man, it is certain that its intellect must be of a very high order; but yet so stupid is the insect that if it enters a room by an open window, and gets into another which is shut, it will continue vainly to buzz against the glass; for its intellect does not enable it to retrace its steps and escape by the one which is open.

Its devotion to its queen is admirable, its self-sacrifice for her is great; the hive bears the appearance of a well-ordered commonwealth, but all this involves no element which can be designated moral. Its stupidity on numerous points makes it certain that the intellect which it possesses is not its own, but that of another. Bees are precisely the same morally as they were three thousand years ago. Such, then, is the condition to which the world would have been reduced, if for the purpose of rendering the existence of moral evil impossible, the Creator had declined to create a free agent, or in other words a moral being.

The demand, therefore, that the Creator should have rendered the existence of moral evil and the consequences which have resulted from it impossible, means that no being should have existed which could bow in lowly reverence before that power which built the universe, who could adore God because He is worthy of adoration, or love Him because He is the embodiment of loveliness; or who could choose the right in opposition to the strong, because it is right that that which is right should vanquish that which is strong. Where would have been the noble? Where would have been the morally beautiful? Where would have been the sense of duty? Where would have been the army of martyrs who, sooner than violate their conscience, have yielded up their lives to a torturing death? Where would

have been those who have striven (imperfectly I admit) to form in themselves something of the character of Jesus Christ? Where, with all reverence be it spoken, would have been that glorious character itself, the contemplation of which has acted on the spiritual and moral world with a force similar to that exerted by the sun on the natural world, breathing into it life and energy, recovering the degraded from their degradation, and elevating the holy to higher degrees of holiness? If, for the purpose of rendering moral evil impossible, free agents had never been created, there would have been none to cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty;" none to exclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb;" none to acquiesce in the great declarations, "Blessed are the meek; Blessed are the pure in heart; Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness; Blessed are the merciful; Blessed are the peacemakers; Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Nay, modern anti-theistic Altruism would have been impossible; for not one of the qualities which it desiderates could have come into being. Who, I ask, can feel love for that which is not lovely, or for an agent who is incapable of acting otherwise than it does? Many such agents exist who benefit us; the food which we eat is absolutely necessary for the support of our lives; but who ever felt a feeling of gratitude, or thought of returning thanks either to it or them? If

only necessary agents, or animals had existed, the existence of a moral world would have been impossible; and that the latter should exist without rendering the existence of moral evil possible involves a contradiction.

The question at issue may be briefly stated thus: Was it desirable that free (that is, moral) agents should have been created with all the possibilities of moral evil which their creation involved, or that the world should have contained no higher order of beings than the highest animals? Few, I think, will affirm that this last alternative would have been the preferable one. I fully admit the terrible character of moral evil, and the fearful results which it has wrought; but the Creator, when He determined to create a finite moral agent, must have foreseen all the consequences which would result from His creating a being endowed with the power of choosing the evil, as well as the good. He must, therefore, have determined that it was right to do so, notwithstanding the consequences which He foreknew would follow. Who will venture to affirm that He was in error? He must also have foreseen the remotest consequences of His creative acts, which we cannot; and known that He could work out from them results consistent with His holiness and benevolence. This Christianity affirms that He has provided the means of doing, and that this formed a part of that purpose which He purposed in Himself before the ages began.

Into this subject space forbids that I should enter, but this is the proper place to ask the reader's attention to it. It is true that an attempt has been made to explain these difficulties by throwing the blame of the apparent imperfections, the sin and suffering, with which the world abounds, on the imperfect action of the machinery by which it was brought into existence in its present form. But all that it succeeds in doing is to remove it a little from our view. Who, I ask, was the constructor of this machine? Did He not foresee all the consequences which would result from its working? Must He not have stood by, without interfering, while these consequences were being ground out? View the subject as we may, the permitted existence of moral evil, and of the consequences which have resulted from it, must have formed a portion of His creative plan, for every being, the holy, and the unholy, is upheld in existence every moment by the energy of His will; and if He were to withdraw that energy, both the one and the other would immediately pass into non-existence.

The existence of moral evil, therefore, must be intended to realize some purpose for good which would be incapable of realization apart from its permitted existence. The most important of these, namely, the existence of a free agent, is one which lies clearly within our mental vision to see that it is productive of the highest good; and I have been careful

to dwell on it in considerable detail, because, to those who have not carefully considered the subject, it forms the most plausible objection which the anti-Theist adduces against the existence of a holy and benevolent Creator. Other reasons for its permitted existence I shall point out presently. But I readily admit that the whole can only be fully known and rightly estimated when we can take a larger view of the Creator's work.

Here, then, is the legitimate place for faith, for surely it is not only religious, but in the highest degree rational, to trust that He who is doing innumerable things on which our reason is fully competent to sit in judgment, is doing all things right, although there may be not a few things into the purpose of which our finite intellects cannot penetrate. Scientists ask us to have faith in the ultimate discoveries of science on points on which their present knowledge is imperfect. Is it, then, not rational, I ask, that we should have faith in God when some parts of His working, both in creation and providence, are inexplicable by our finite understandings? Let no one, however, draw the conclusion because the permitted existence of moral evil forms a portion of the Creator's plan, that it is destined to exist for evermore in the universe which He has made. It has been, and still is, a popular belief that it will be so; but that belief has no foundation in reason and is nowhere affirmed

in revelation. On the contrary, there is much in the latter, unless language is used in a non-natural sense, which affirms the reverse. Moral evil, as I have shown, has a purpose for its permitted existence, which it is fitted to realize. Who, then, will venture to affirm that when the end of its existence has been accomplished it will not cease to be, or that the Creator has not the means of winning back to Himself during the ages of the future the erring children who have revolted from Him here ?

Let us now consider the objections so often urged, that even if the creation of finite free agents involved the possible existence of moral evil, could not a Creator all-powerful, wise, holy, and benevolent have limited its amount and prevented it from casting such a blight on the world which He has made ? Would it not have been better if He had removed out of existence every being which had become infected with evil, and thus prevented it from forming an environment of evil, by which this moral pestilence has been spread wider and wider ? To many there can be no doubt that these objections seem plausible ones.

To these objections I reply, that it is impossible to form a judgment as to the amount of moral evil of which it was consistent with the holiness and the goodness of the Creator to permit the existence, until we can comprehend His entire creative plan, and

know all the purposes which its permitted existence is intended to subserve. I have already proved that its existence has realized one of the highest purposes for good, namely, the rendering the existence of moral agents possible. But as to its amount, or the future purposes it is intended to subserve, our finite intellects are incapable of forming a judgment. With respect to the objection that it would have been better if He had caused it to pass out of existence as soon as it had become rooted in the world, I reply that its continued existence subserves valuable purposes in the formation of character, and that it would have been impossible for these to have been realized if it had been blotted out of existence as soon as it had become so. The All-Holy will doubtless cause it to cease to exist when it has realized the purposes for which he has permitted it. Here, again, is rational ground for the exercise of faith, that He whose power and wisdom have built the universe, with all its wondrous adaptations, and whose goodness has provided sentient beings with such ample means of happiness and enjoyment—a happiness and enjoyment which would be all but complete if men would live in conformity with the principles of the moral law as enunciated by Jesus Christ,—has done, and will ultimately be proved to have done, all things in conformity with perfect holiness and benevolence, when we are capable of taking a more enlarged view of His creative and providential plan. Who I ask, when

we consider the limitation of our faculties, can justly venture to affirm that such faith is irrational? Surely not the scientist, who asks us to have faith that the discoveries of the future will fill up the gaps in his present knowledge. One thing we can see plainly, that as long as moral evil exists suffering is its just reward, and that the foreknowledge that suffering will be the certain result of sin is its chief deterrent. God, therefore, is holy and benevolent, who has bound the two together in inseparable union.

I will now consider some of the other purposes which the existence of evil is fitted to subserve. In doing so I intend borrowing from a recently published work of Dr. Martineau, entitled *A Study of Religion*. The work in question is one of those which are addressed to a high class of thinkers. I shall, therefore, not quote from it verbatim, but endeavour to translate its leading thoughts into language more adapted to that class of readers for whom the present work is intended. Speaking of the additional sufferings which man undergoes, compared with those of the animal creation, the doctor observes—

"The additional dimensions which suffering gains in man beyond the limits of animal sensibility originate in our superior mental endowments. It is because we can see fore and aft from the point where we stand, because we have ever with us the possible

as well as the actual, because the visible has no power to blot out the invisible from our thought, that with us no pang can be born or perish in a moment. It sends no notice of its approach, it leaves with us many a vestige of its departure ; far beyond the term of total eclipse it spreads a broad penumbra of mournful twilight. What, then, is the just inference from this ? Would you renounce your reason that you might be saved your tears ? Would you quit your many-chambered mind, and shut yourself up in a single cell, and draw down its blinds, and see no lightning, and know nothing until you are struck ? Further : Man's power of self-consciousness enables him to concentrate his attention on a particular subject in a manner which animals cannot. This power is the foundation of nearly all that is noble in him both in intellect and in character. We all know from experience that this power of concentrating our attention on our pains greatly intensifies them. On the other hand, this act of concentration greatly intensifies our pleasures. From all these mighty endowments of man we must part if we would decline our heritage of pain. That heritage is the consequence of intellect, and cannot be resigned without forfeiting all that intellect brings.

Suffering is the discipline through which our moral nature gains its true elevation. Not that the mere incidence of pain necessarily awakens the torpid conscience, or frees a man from the slavery

of selfishness. No mere experience of sense can produce a moral result. Even in low types of mind, it is quite possible for it to dry up and harden the character. But although some characters may do without it, and others may do nothing with it, it is true that you must seek for the greatest and best among those who have abounded in hardships, and who have passed through the discipline of struggling. Ease and prosperity may supply a sufficient school for respectable commoners, but without struggling and effort is no man ennobled. Every highest form of excellence rises from this dark ground, and emerges into its nobleness by the conquest of some severe necessity. In what Elysium would you find the patience and silent self-control of which every nurse can testify, or the fortitude in right, which even the rack cannot quench or the dungeon wear out, or the courage of the prophet to fling his Divine word before the wrath of princes or the mocking of the people? It will doubtless be urged that these are superfluous virtues, their value being only relative against the evils which they lessen. But is this true? Is the man who has never been subdued to patience braced to fortitude, fired with heroic enthusiasm, as strong, as noble, as free, as he who has been schooled in self-sacrifice and self-denial? These qualities do more than conquer the besetting evil: they add a cubit to the moral stature; they clear

the vision, they refine the thought, they animate the will. So that there is not a duty, however simple, which does not win from them a fresh grace; and if to our chastening we must thus acknowledge this personal debt, it is equally certain that the sufferings of others speak with an indisputable appeal to our affections, and awaken in us a disinterestedness else impossible. Deeply sunken must be that moral nature in which they do not call into active energy something which is good. It is in the presence of sorrow and of suffering that we forget ourselves, and in many a home the crippled child or the disabled father has trained to sobriety and tenderness the habits which would otherwise have been self-seeking and frivolous. The noble army of benefactors to mankind consists of men and women whose hearts have been penetrated by a deep feeling of compassion; and who have offered themselves up in self-sacrifice to relieve others from suffering and to rescue them from sin. Is there not something in this, inherently noble? Could we well spare such characters in a world where there is neither physical nor moral evil? Are they mere instruments for getting rid of this or that evil from the world, and have they nothing morally beautiful, nothing glorious in themselves? It is their depth of character which comes home to us with power.

"But further still—apart from its sorrow, the

heart would seldom find its rest in God. Even the cynic feeds his cynicism in the fact that men betake themselves to religion when they have lost all besides. He sees aright, but he gives the meaning wrong. He thinks it some mean fear which brings forth the sufferer's prayer, and takes it as a proof that religion is nothing but the lowest dregs of life, when the generous wine is all drained off. And so it would be if the sole reality lay in temporal well-being. But what does the experience of those whose lives have been a course of unbroken prosperity testify, and who have had no experience of struggles, disappointments, or of suffering? For the most part they form the regiment that, after having amply provided themselves with the means of enjoyment for many years, that they will have nothing to do during the remainder of their lives but 'to eat, drink, and be merry,' or, in other words, enjoy themselves according to their respective tastes. But does it not for the most part happen that such persons speedily become sated, unable to kill time, devoured by *ennui;* and, like the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, after having tried the whole range of enjoyment within the reach of man, exclaim in bitterness of spirit, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity'? But when such an one has been awakened from this baseless dream by the advent of suffering, sorrow, and disappointment, the inner and the outer depths of the realities of things become

open to his vision; and thus it becomes revealed to him that there is an infinite reality beyond the present and the visible, that is, God, in whom alone can be found rest and peace. Thus, instead of passing away from actualities, the worldly prosperous man for the first time discovers them, and the foot which once blindly attempted to support itself on the shifting sandbank, as though it were solid ground, at last rests upon the rock."

The demand which has been made that the Creator, if He is all-powerful and benevolent, ought to have made sin and suffering impossible, I shall answer by quoting another passage from the profound thinker above referred to, with only a few omissions and alterations as are necessary for accommodating it to my present purpose, which will leave the sense intact.

"The Creator might have certainly effected this, but only by substituting mechanism for free agency. It is only by abstaining from predetermining necessity, and allowing room for preferential choice, that He renders the existence of character, and the testing of fidelity a possibility. In virtue of this abstinence, He is the cause of the existence of character; but not the cause of what that character shall be. Thus a universe which no sin could invade, would be one in which no character could exist; and in insisting that every access should be

shut against moral evil, we ask that the holiness of God should cancel its own conditions. It is because He is holy, and cannot be content with an unmoral world, where all perfection is given and none is earned, that He refuses to render guilt impossible and inward harmony mechanical. If He were only benevolent, it might suffice to fill creation with the pleasures of sentient existence; but, being holy too, He wills that beings should exist capable of determining themselves by a free preference to the life which He approves; and preference there cannot be unless the path is open to choose the evil as well as the good. To set up, therefore, an absolute barrier against the admission of wrong, would reduce human life to a kind of menagerie, instead of allowing it to culminate in a moral society.

"Would, then, the objector prefer that vice and wrong should produce happiness, or would he have it, make no difference to the external condition of mankind, whether greed and licentiousness prevail, or disinterestedness and purity? Surely the entail of suffering on moral evil is the indispensable expression of a righteous administration of things. Sin being in the world, it would be monstrous that there should be no suffering: and would more than justify the complaint which is not unfrequently raised against the insufficiency of the punishment which overtakes human transgression, expressed in the words: 'Because

sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' The incidence of such suffering may doubtless at times be open to wonder and criticism ; it may fall on the innocent, and seem to miss its proper aim. But its existence and its amount are only what must be expected in a state of being in which the character is to bear its consequences. The question which presses on us is not, How does it consist with the benevolence of God to admit so much morally incurred pain ? but, How does it consist with the holiness of God to admit so much unholiness in human life ? "

The fundamental principles involved in the answer to this last question have been already virtually met in the course of the previous arguments. I shall, therefore, only offer on them a few brief remarks. As I have already observed, the determination of the Creator to create finite free agents, involved the possibility of the existence of moral evil, and of all the consequences which result from it—it involving a contradiction to create a being capable of freely choosing the right, without at the same time rendering possible its choosing the wrong; just as it involves a contradiction to affirm that it is possible to form a surface which is convex, without at the same time involving the possible existence of a surface which is concave. When, then, it is asked, with so

much apparent plausibilty, why did not the Creator, all-powerful and beneficent, so constitute the world as to have rendered the existence of moral evil impossible, attention cannot be too strongly drawn to the fact that if free agents are to exist, the demand that He should do so involves a demand that He should work contradictions, a thing which even omnipotence cannot effect. Who, then, I ask, will venture to affirm that the Creator has acted contrary to His holiness, or His benevolence in creating free agents? Is not free agency the source of everything which is holy, of everything which is morally beautiful in the universe? Would any free agent be content to sacrifice his free agency at the price of being converted into an animal, or a machine? It has been shown, in the course of the previous reasonings, that the pain, the suffering, and the struggles, which result from the existence of moral evil, tend not only to the formation of character, but to the production of everything which is noble in it; and so far work out results which are in the highest degree desirable. What would each of us be, if we had been born and brought up in a state of things in which no effort was necessary; in which there was nothing to contend against, and no difficulty to be surmounted? Obviously we should have been beings destitute of character, and of every quality which is noble.

The only open question, therefore, is: Ought a God who is holy to tolerate the mass of wickedness

with which human life abounds? or could He not have limited its amount? One limit he has assigned to it. A moral being in whom conscience has become extinct, the impulses supreme, and the will powerless, has really ceased to be a moral agent, and has sunk to the level of an animal. Beyond this he cannot go in his wickedness. But it may be urged, Ought not narrower limits to have been assigned to it? To this I answer that on this point we are incapable of judging, because with our limited faculties we cannot penetrate all the purposes which its permitted existence is intended to subserve, or to grasp with our finite intellects the creative and providential plan. One thing only can be affirmed for certain, that it is inconsistent with the character which Christian Theism attributes to God, that He should permit the endless existence of wills standing in direct opposition to His own.

Similar is the teaching of Christianity respecting the uses, which the struggles, the temptations, and the sufferings to which we are exposed are intended to be subservient. To adopt the words of an Apostle who suffered far more than falls to the lot of ordinary Christians, "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." What glory? Not the glory of a halo of brightness emitted from us, or shining around us; but the glory of a higher and

higher spiritual and moral elevation, for the only things which are truly glorious are the moral perfections which are exhibited in the character of Jesus Christ. That such is the end which these things are intended to subserve is the affirmation of every one of the sacred writers; and the only limit which they recognize is, the attainment to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Nay, one of them has even gone further, and affirmed that Jesus Christ Himself, "learned obedience by the things which He suffered;" "that He was made perfect through suffering;" and "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." If this is true of Him who was perfect man, how much more true must it be of those who are not only imperfect men, but whose animal appetites tempt to the indulgence of that which is sinful and evil!

The importance of the subject which we have been considering in this and the previous chapter will render it desirable that before concluding I should set before the reader the chief points which have been established in the course of the argument, which throw light on the difficulties with which the existence of physical and moral evil is alleged to be attended.

1. When we consider the vastness of the universe, the small portion of it which is accessible to our observation, and the limited nature of our faculties,

it is reasonable to expect that portions of the creative plan, and of its providential government, may contain difficulties, and that things may exist the uses of which we are unable to explain. But when we consider their limited number, compared with the numberless indications of power, wisdom, and goodness with which the universe is everywhere loaded, these entirely overbalance the weight of the objections against Christian Theism which are founded on the difficulties in question; and afford rational ground for believing, and even feeling assured, that what is inexplicable now, when we are capable of taking an enlarged view of God's creative and providential plan, which the Christian revelation promises that we shall be hereafter, will be found to be consistent with every attribute which Christian Theism attributes to Him.

2. That the amount of suffering which originates in moral causes, that is, in causes over which man can exert control, is out of all proportion greater than that which originates in causes which are purely physical.

3. That the sufferings which originate in causes which are purely physical, arise from the fact that the Creator has seen good to act in His work of creation and providence through the agency of forces, which can only energize in conformity with a law from which they cannot deviate, and that this purpose is a wise one is evident, for if these forces were

made to vary in their action so as to avert the consequences which result to man, whenever he happens to cross their path, these interferences would be so numerous as to render the mode of their action at any particular time and place incapable of calculation, and that this condition of things, if it did not render human life impossible, would throw it into a state of hopeless confusion. On the other hand the action of these forces being calculable, no small portion of the evils which arise from the present mode of their activity are capable of being avoided by prudent calculation.

4. That pleasure and pain are so closely correlated together, that it is extremely doubtful whether the demand that a nervous system could be so constructed, which was capable of producing pleasure, and not under altered conditions be capable of producing pain, would not involve a contradiction. Further: That pain in very numerous cases acts as a warning against danger; and when it does so, it is undeniable that its existence is attended with results which are highly beneficial, and therefore consistent with benevolent purpose.

5. That the happiness and enjoyment of which the phenomena of sentient life prove the existence is out of all proportion greater than the amount of suffering which arises from physical and moral causes united; and that this disposes of the objection which is urged against the benevolence of the

Creator on the ground of the large amount of suffering which unquestionably exists; and consequently that the existence of suffering in individual cases for which with our present knowledge we are incapable of assigning a reason, must be capable of explanation on grounds which are consistent with His benevolence, if we were capable of taking a more extended view of His creative and providential plan, and of the ultimate results which it is calculated to realize.

The following points relate to the existence of moral evil, and to them I ask the reader's careful consideration.

1. That the idea that it is possible to create a being who is capable of choosing the good, but who is so constituted as to be incapable of choosing evil, is no less a contradiction than that it is possible to form a convex surface, and at the same time to render the formation of a concave one impossible.

2. That the demand that the Creator should have rendered the existence of moral evil with all the consequences which have resulted from it impossible, and yet that He should have created beings capable of self-determination, free agency, and with an intelligence such as that possessed by man, is a demand that He should work contradictions, which, with all reverence be it spoken, is a thing which not even omnipotence can effect.

3. That if the existence of moral evil had been rendered impossible, the world would have contained no higher order of being than necessary agents and the most intelligent of animals. In a word, no being possessed of a spiritual and moral nature could have been brought into existence.

4. That this being so, it was calculated to effect the highest purposes of holiness and benevolence to create agents who possessed all those endowments which we include under the terms "rational," "intellectual," "spiritual," and "moral," notwithstanding all the consequences with which the Creator must have foreseen that the creation of such beings might be attended.

5. That the present constitution of things in which the evil is inexplicably mingled with the good, and the struggles and exertion rendered necessary by it, is one which tends to the development of everything in human nature which we include under the terms great, noble, elevated, to the formation of character, and even of those milder virtues which we designate saintly.

6. That these things being so, the permitted existence of moral evil is consistent with perfect holiness and benevolence in the Creator, and that it by no means follows that its existence will be endless.

I by no means affirm that these considerations solve all the difficulties of the problem; but

those which they do solve—and they are not few—afford ample ground for believing that those which with our limited knowledge we cannot solve are solvable; and that the thing necessary to render them so is an enlarged view of God's creative and providential plan.

Yet if it is true, as many not a little eminent in philosophy and science have ventured to affirm, that man is destined to perish with the dissolution of his body, I fully admit that it is impossible to vindicate the present moral government of the world; for, in that case it is a mass of confusion which hopelessly confounds human reason, holding out no hope of its future rectification; the existence of suffering and sorrow would subserve no purpose which is beneficial, or tending to ultimate good; and the elevation of character, and the moral qualities which the discipline of life is calculated to generate by means of many a hard struggle with temptation, and with many a trial, would come into existence merely after a short interval to cease to be. This opens to us the question of man's survival, and the possibilities involved in it, a point which I propose to consider in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

THE QUESTION WHETHER WE HAVE REASON FOR BELIEVING THAT WE SHALL SURVIVE THE DISSOLUTION OF OUR BODIES; AND ITS BEARING ON THE PREVIOUS ARGUMENTS.

I NEED hardly remind the reader how important is the bearing of this question on the subject we have been discussing in the previous chapters. If man perishes at death, it is impossible to deny that the present state of things, including the moral government of the world, is exceedingly imperfect. But if, on the other hand, this life is only the commencement of his existence, infinite possibilities would then lie open during the ages of the future, in the light of which we must form our estimate of his present condition. It will be necessary, therefore, before bringing this work to a conclusion, that I should point out the fallacies which underlie the anti-theistic position that man perishes with the dissolution of his body; and state the reasons on which we believe that our conscious personality will survive the stroke of death.

If, then, the anti-theistic position is true that man perishes with his body, in what state would it place the proof given in the previous chapters of the existence of a God who possesses the attributes which Christian Theism attributes to Him? In them it has been proved from our intuition of causation, that the existence of a First Cause of the Universe is a necessity of thought; from its adjustments, adaptations, and correlations, that its First Cause must be a being possessed of boundless power and intelligence; and from the moral nature of man, combined with the marks of regard for the happiness of His creatures, which are manifested in His creative works, that He must be a being possessed of the attributes which Christian Theism ascribes to God. These proofs, as I have already observed, stand on wholly independent grounds, and are not touched by the objections urged by anti-Theists on the ground of the existence of physical and moral evil. On the other hand, it is impossible to deny, if man's existence is limited to the present life, that the difficulties in question are incapable of explanation; and the moral government of the world incapable of vindication as holy, just, and good. Our argument, then, would be placed in the following position: Between the reasons for believing in the existence of a God, who possesses the attributes which Christian Theism attributes to Him, and the

difficulties in question, our reason would be hopelessly confounded.

This being so, it will be necessary that I should set before the reader the chief reasons on which the anti-Theist founds his affirmation that man perishes at death, and endeavour to test their validity, before I set forth the grounds on which we believe that this life is only the commencement of his personal conscious existence, and that all that death effects is to translate him into a state of existence under different conditions.

The anti-theistic position, briefly stated, is as follows—

The brain thinks—that is, that it is not only the organ of thought, but that it generates thought, together with that which we designate consciousness; our highest aspirations, our intellectual powers, and our moral nature; in fact, everything which we include under the words "mind," "soul," and "spirit." Consequently, all thought is the result of the arrangement and of the motions of the particles of matter which compose our brains. What, then, are the facts which are adduced as affording proof of this position?

1. That the phenomena which come under our observation prove that the power of thinking is the exclusive possession of beings who possess brains; or, to put the position tersely, where there is no brain, there is no thought.

2. That the power of thinking varies with the size of the brain and the nature and arrangement of the matter which composes it.

3. That diseases and malformation of the brain affect our power of thinking, producing at the one extreme mania, and at the other idiotcy; and that our mental powers are variously affected by certain forms of nervous and bodily disease.

4. That every act of thinking is attended with a corresponding motion in the brain.

5. That the loss of certain of its parts renders thought, and that of certain other parts sensation, impossible.

6. That when the brain is completely at rest, in other words sound asleep, thought ceases.

7. That a power of thinking, apart from the possession of a brain, and independent of its activity, has never come within the range of human experience.

8. That several of the reasons which have been urged as affording proof that man will survive the dissolution of his body are equally valid to prove the survival of animals.

These are the chief grounds which are adduced as affording proof that mind and brain are identical; and it is justly urged that, if they are identical, it affords conclusive proof that our personal conscious existence must perish with the dissolution of our bodies. Others have been added, but it will

be unnecessary to draw the reader's attention to them; because, if those mentioned above fail to prove it, it will scarcely be contended that the others are sufficient to support the weight of the argument. The general truth of the facts above enumerated I shall not dispute; but I deny that they justify the inference which is drawn from them, namely, that the brain generates thought, and that when the brain perishes our conscious personality, the existence of which constitutes the highest certitude of which we are capable, perishes likewise.

I observe, therefore, that it by no means follows, because as far as our present experience goes, thought is the exclusive possession of beings who possess brains, that that within us which thinks, namely, our conscious personality, must cease with their dissolution. To affirm that the only condition under which thinking is possible is that of an organized brain is to assert that which it is impossible to prove. Before this can be proved, the reasons which I have given, in the course of the previous arguments, for believing that blind matter and force incapable of self-direction cannot by any amount of interaction produce an adaptation or a moral agent must first be answered. It is simply absurd to affirm that life can only exist under the same conditions as those under which it exists in this planet. This being so, there is nothing irrational in assuming that thought and personality may do so likewise.

What, then, do the facts prove which I have enumerated above? I answer this, and nothing more, that as we are at present constituted, mind, brain, and the nervous system are most intimately correlated to one another in a manner analogous to the correlations which exist between the vocal organs, the ear, the atmosphere, the brain, and the mind; so that the one cannot act in the production of sound, language, or thought without the other; or as the sun, the ether, the eye, the brain, and the mind are correlated to one another, so that apart from their conjoint action, neither the one nor the other could produce what we designate "vision." All, then, that the facts adduced by the anti-Theist prove is, that the mind, the brain, and the nervous system are so adjusted to one another that the mind can only act through the instrumentality of the brain; and that the nervous system cannot be set in action without producing motions in the brain, which motions the mind translates into sensations, thoughts, and ideas. It follows, therefore, that the facts which are adduced by the anti-Theist as affording proof that the personal existence of which we are conscious during life perishes at death, prove nothing one way or the other, but leave the question whether it will survive the dissolution of the body, untouched.

Let us now consider the reasons on which our belief in its survival is founded. In doing so, I shall not

trouble the reader with a number of metaphysical arguments which, in former times, have been adduced as affording proof of this position. My own opinion is that our knowledge of the ontology of mind is far too limited, even if such knowledge lies within man's powers to attain, to enable us to found on it an argument which is really reliable ; certainly not one which will bring conviction to those who have never studied such questions.

Two of the reasons for believing that the conscious beings which we designate ourselves, will survive the dissolution of our bodies I have had occasion to refer to in the course of the previous arguments. I must, at the risk of repetition, point out their bearing on the subject we are now considering.

(i) While it forms a certitude, than which we possess none stronger, that we have continued the same beings from the earliest dawn of our conscious existence, yet scientists assure us that it is an unquestionable fact that our entire bodies have not only been in a state of constant change, but that in the case of those who have attained mature life, that they have changed several times over. This being so, it follows that our conscious personality must be something distinct from the matter which composes our brains, for the one is the subject of continual change ; the other changes not. If, then, our personality, that is, we ourselves, have survived every

change through which not only our brains but our bodies have passed; if it is true that there is not a single particle in our present bodies which was in those which we possessed, say, thirty years ago; there can be no reason for believing that their dissolution will cause the dissolution of our conscious personality. On the contrary, its persistence during this course of years, amidst all the changes through which our bodies (including our brains) have passed, affords the strongest reason for believing that it will continue to persist after their dissolution. It is probably owing to the strength of this argument that those who affirm that man perishes with the dissolution of his body, have propounded the theory that that which we imagine to be our permanent existence, is nothing but a succession of states of consciousness. The untenableness of this theory I have already sufficiently exposed.

(ii) I have observed in a previous chapter that the affirmations of our consciousness respecting the reality of our moral nature, such as it is there described, prove that there is something within us distinct, and wholly different in character, from the particles of matter which compose our bodies. If this distinction is real, there can be no reason why the dissolution of our bodies should involve the dissolution of our personality. On the other hand, as it is one of our highest certitudes that our moral being has been persistent through the various

changes of our bodies, there is every reason to believe that it will continue to persist after their dissolution. That our moral being does thus persist is proved not only by the direct testimony of our consciousness, but from the fact that we both feel responsible, and are held responsible by others, for actions done in the distant past.

(iii) The next argument which I shall adduce is from the greatness of man's powers, and from the imperfect sphere which this life affords for their exercise and development. It may be briefly stated thus—

I have proved in the course of the preceding reasonings that the adjustments, adaptations, and correlations with which the universe everywhere abounds, that its Creator must possess an intelligence to which it is impossible to assign limitations; and that He must have had a definite purpose in creating a being such as man. How, then, stand the facts? Man has been brought into existence, in possession of various faculties, some of which are of a very high order, and all capable of a higher development. But so short and uncertain is the duration of human life, that a large portion of mankind are cut off in infancy; others in early youth; others when, after a painful training, they have become fitted to enter on the work of life; others in the midst of their highest usefulness;—and even at best the period of man's activity, compared with the powers with which he is

endowed, is very brief. Has, then, the all-wise Creator endowed mankind, and especially that portion of them that I have just mentioned, with these various faculties and powers, in order that they may vanish like a dream? Has He placed others in situations of the highest usefulness, and endowed them with powers fitted for their work, in order that they might vanish from the scene immediately on entering on the work for which they were pre-eminently fitted? Has He endowed others with the highest aspirations of which our moral nature is capable in order that they might shine forth as a meteor and disappear for evermore? If, then, the Creator must have had a purpose in bringing man into existence; and if that purpose has been directed by a wisdom to which it is impossible to assign limitations; that purpose must fail of its accomplishment, if a large portion of mankind come into existence, and perish before their faculties are matured; and another portion of them before they can effect anything, which the faculties with which they are endowed are pre-eminently fitted to accomplish. It may be urged that we cannot fathom the purposes of the Creator. This is undoubtedly true of the length and breadth of His creative work; but we are fully competent to judge if man passes out of existence before he can exert those faculties with which he is endowed, that his creation involves a purposeless expenditure of power, or a lack of wisdom on the part of his Creator. But

this is impossible. Death, therefore, cannot be the termination of man's existence, but a removal into a sphere of action, where he will find an opportunity for the exercise of those powers, which, for reasons into which we cannot penetrate, have been denied him here.

(iv) The next argument which I shall adduce is founded on the fact that in no small number of cases man's intellectual powers and moral affections continue in full vigour up to the time immediately preceding the dissolution of his body. I fully allow that in the great majority of cases the wear of advancing years, increasing weakness, disease, and suffering, are attended with a gradual decay of our intellectual powers, and with a weakening of the energies of our moral nature; and that it not unfrequently happens that during some interval before death, both fall into a state of stupor. If this were universally the case, I admit that the position that the death of the body involved the dissolution of our conscious existence would not be without plausibility. But the fact is far otherwise. Numerous cases unquestionably occur, in which the intellect has continued as bright, and the affections as strong, immediately before death as they have been at any period during life. Not only does death not unfrequently occur suddenly in the midst of man's activities; but even when it has been preceded by wasting disease,

the intellect has continued as clear, and the affections as strong, up to the moment of death, as they have been at any time during the days of bodily health and vigour. This being so, it follows that the diseases which have worn out the body, have failed to wear out the mental powers. It will doubtless be objected that such cases are rare. Granted; but though rare, they unquestionably exist, and the fact of their existence is all that is required for my present argument. Is it credible, I ask, that the powerful intellect, the warm affections, and, I will add, the ardent faith, which were in active energy up to the time of death, have passed into non-existence? or that those forces which have gradually worn the body out, but in doing this have left the mental powers untouched, should be able to cause them to pass into non-existence in an instant?

What, then, do we know, and what do we not know, respecting death? This is a very important question, because, where knowledge founded on facts is wanting, imagination too frequently attempts to fill up deficiencies. Of the real nature of life we are profoundly ignorant. Many theories respecting it have been propounded, but they are theories only. Equally ignorant are we of the ultimate nature of mind. Both remain at the present day as profound mysteries as they were at the earliest dawnings of philosophic thought. This being so, it is impossible

to prove, though it is easy to affirm, that death is the destruction of our conscious personality. All that we know about it is its outward phenomena, namely, that it suspends the manifestation of every previously existing power; and that it liberates the chemical forces which were previously held in check by the vital ones, so that they are able without hindrance to effect the dissolution of our bodies. But on our mental powers, the forces which destroy the body are powerless to act. Death, it is true, removes them from the sphere of our cognizance. When it takes place, those powers which a minute before death were in lively exercise have vanished in a moment; but that it has destroyed them there is not a tittle of evidence, except on the assumption that brain and mind are identical; and that the death of the one involves the destruction of the other. But this is the very thing which scientific investigation has failed to prove. Still more, eminent unbelieving scientists have candidly admitted that, as far as scientific investigation has yet penetrated, it affords no means of explaining how motions—the only things of which we have a certain knowledge that the brain is capable—are translated into thoughts. In a word, motion is destitute of a single element of thought.

(v) We now come to the most important of all the reasons on which our belief in man's survival after death is founded—the moral argument. While I set

it before the reader, I must ask him steadily to keep in mind that the belief in the existence of a God, who possesses a power and wisdom to which it is impossible to assign limitations, and who is a Moral Being and the Moral Governor of the Universe, can now no longer be viewed as an open question, but must be assumed to have been proved by the arguments adduced in the previous chapters. I, therefore, take as the foundation of my argument that such a being exists as Christian Theism presupposes, and from this I shall argue if a Moral Governor of the world exists, who is holy, just, and righteous, when we take into consideration the evident imperfection of the present moral order of things, that the conclusion is inevitable that it is absolutely necessary for the vindication of a righteous government, that man should survive the dissolution of his body.

What, then, are the phenomena which the moral world presents on the assumption that man perishes at death?

1. That it is undeniable that virtuous men are not rewarded, nor evil men punished according to their deserts.

2. That in numerous cases a career of successful villainy would be the more prudent course to pursue than one of self-sacrificing virtue; and that the only thing which a man of evil propensities would have to consider would be whether in gratifying them

he has sufficient astuteness to avoid detection, and thereby escape the penalties which society inflicts on evildoers for its own protection.

3. That such is the condition of the moral world as it presents itself to our view, that if man perishes at death, the old saying, "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die," would be the most rational guide of life. The principle involved in this saying admits of the following general application. It is best, if man perishes in the grave, that during life's brief day each man should gratify his own particular tastes, be they what they may, and pursue the course of conduct which he thinks will be most conducive to his own happiness; for life is not only short, but its duration is so uncertain, that it is impossible to say, whether anyone may live to realize a distant good. On the other hand, death is certain at no distant day, when the virtuous and the vicious, the greatest self-sacrificer for the good of others and he who has lived in the gratification of his most selfish appetites, will alike pass into a state of unconsciousness, from which there will be no awakening; and if from some error in judgment, a course of conduct has been pursued which has made life a burden, it will not be difficult to find an exit from it which will be comparatively painless. It is evident that if this principle were acted upon it would convert the moral world into a state of hopeless confusion; yet it is the legitimate conclusion from the principle in question.

This position involves such serious consequences, that the anti-theistic Utilitarian will doubtless reply that a virtuous life will be far more conducive to a man's own happiness than a vicious one; and that it is wise to sacrifice present pleasure, and to submit to present self-sacrifice, for the purpose of realizing future good. How, I ask, are the overwhelming majority of mankind to be convinced of the truth of either of these positions? The second is easily disposed of, for so uncertain is life's duration, that it is impossible to calculate whether it will be prolonged a sufficient time to enable the self-sacrificer to reap the fruit of his self-denial; and if it is not thus prolonged, it is evident that the sacrifice of present happiness in pursuit of a future good, has been a folly. But the principle on which this system of morality is founded, affirms that what we call virtue is the pursuit of that line of conduct which will most conduce to the realization of our own happiness, and that of others, without regard to any other consideration. In other words, it makes virtue to be dependent on the power of rightly calculating the results of actions; and vice to be the result of the want of this power, or of the careless use of it. But the majority of mankind are not good calculators; and are, therefore, certain to arrive at opposite conclusions as to what that course of conduct is which will realize their own happiness, for respecting this,

tastes differ widely; and what the line of conduct which will do so is, each man must be the sole judge. Thus, a man in whom the desire for sensual gratification predominates will never arrive at the conclusion that a life of self-denial, in the hope of attaining some future good which he may never live to attain, will be the best means of realizing his own greatest happiness. How, I ask, is it possible to prove that crime will not effect this, if the perpetrator can manage to escape detection? At any rate, one whom unbelievers do not deny to have been one of the greatest self-sacrificers for what he believed to be the good of others, has recorded the following opinion: "If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable." The actual experiences of those who have spent long years in labours, self-denial, and suffering, in promoting the good of others, in doing what they were persuaded to have been their duty to do, are of more weight than the theories and the speculations of a multitude of philosophers.

4. The following are the results which a careful survey of the moral world presents to the observer, whether he views it in the light of the history of the past, or of the facts of the present. Moral evil, social evil, and political evil, have been and still continue widespread. The self-sacrificer for the good of others receives no adequate return for his labours and sufferings, if his existence perishes

at death. The noble army of martyrs have yielded up their lives in torture, and no avenger has appeared. The wicked have flourished, great crimes have been perpetrated, the righteous have suffered, and the heavens have not thundered. The astute villain frequently escapes human justice, and there is no visible Divine interference to punish him. Suffering, not self-caused, frequently meets with neither alleviation nor compensation here. The history of the past testifies that strength and intellectual power, united with moral unscrupulousness, persistent self-seeking regardless of the consequences to others, ambition which sacrifices the lives of thousands for its gratification, and other similar qualities too numerous to mention, have been those which have obtained the victory in the struggle of life, while those mental qualities on which the Sermon on the Mount pronounces its most emphatic blessing, and which none will venture to pronounce to be mean and despicable, have gone to the wall ; and although this state of things is less prevalent in modern Christendom, it still far too frequently meets the eye of the observer even there. In it, it is true that holiness, disinterestedness, self-sacrifice, and even a conscientious adhesion to a sense of duty, not unfrequently forces vice to render a kind of homage to virtue ; but the satire of the Roman satirist still continues far too true : "Virtue is praised and allowed to perish in the cold."

If, then, man perishes with his body, what, I ask, becomes of a righteous government of God? It is certain that if he does so, it must be confined to this life only; and that after death the righteous have nothing to hope, nor the wicked to fear. What, then, is the inevitable conclusion? I answer, that although some rudiments of a moral government may be discoverable, in the fact that certain penalties are attached to certain sins as their inevitable consequences, yet the government of the moral world, if viewed in the light of this life alone, is of a very imperfect character. Are we, then, to deny that a Righteous Moral Governor exists? As I have already observed, the proof of His existence which has been given in the preceding pages leaves it no longer an open question. Unless, then, our reason is to be hopelessly confounded, there must be another alternative, namely, that this life is only the beginning of human existence, and that man is destined to survive the stroke of death; or, to adopt the words of an Apostle, God "has appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

5. One further argument requires our attention, namely, that founded on the all but universal belief which has been entertained by mankind that there is something in man which survives the

death of the body. I say the "all but universal belief," because doubts have been expressed whether some degraded savage races entertain this belief, or even whether they have any religious ideas whatever. Whether this be so or not rests on the reports of travellers, many of whose opinions on this subject have been proved on subsequent investigation to have been inaccurate. However this may be, it will be unnecessary to discuss the question of their accuracy, because it is certain that the belief that there is something in man, which survives the stroke of death, is so widespread both among civilized and savage races, as to amount to a practical universality. Many of these beliefs are doubtless sufficiently grotesque; but making all allowance for this, the fact remains that the belief exists, and that it is all but, if not quite, as universal as man. The only point which concerns us in our present inquiry is, What has suggested this belief?

I.—It is impossible that it can have originated in a course of reasoning. The intellect of savage races is far too imperfectly developed to render such an account of its origin a possible one.

II.—A belief in our survival after death is certainly not one of our primary intuitions.

III.—As its origin cannot have been derived from either of these sources, it follows that there must be something in the primary constitution of man

which has suggested it, and which even the state of degradation into which savage man has fallen has not been able to obliterate. This being so, a belief which is suggested by man's primary constitution cannot be a delusion pure and simple, but must have a reality of some kind which corresponds to it.

Opponents of this belief have thought it necessary to propound theories to account for its origin on anti-theistic principles. It will be sufficient to notice two of them.

(i) That the intensity of the desire that men have to live, has suggested the idea of a survival after death.

(ii) That the fact that some men have seen their departed friends in dreams, has suggested the idea that they have not only survived the dissolution of their bodies, but that they had actually appeared.

With respect to the first of these theories, it will be sufficient to remark that men have numerous and very strong desires, which do not suggest the idea of their future realization. Why, then, should this particular desire suggest the belief that man will survive the stroke of death not only to a few individuals, but produce an all but universal belief that he will do so; and that, too, in the face of the phenomena of death, which, at least in the case of savages, have all the appearance of a termination of existence?

To discuss the nature of dreams would fall outside the limits of this work. One thing, however, respecting them is certain. The occasions on which we see our departed friends in dreams are comparatively rare. The thing to be accounted for is not what such ideal appearances may have suggested to a few individuals, but how is it possible that they can have suggested the idea of an existence after death to the uncivilized races of mankind in every part of the globe, however little intercourse they may have had with one another. It will scarcely be urged that the idea was likely to have occurred except to a few. Are we, then, to assume that these turned missionaries, and proclaimed this truth to their brother savages, and that they succeeded in inducing them to embrace it? But other strange appearances present themselves in dreams with the utmost vividness, which, whatever effect they may produce for the moment, not even savages continue to believe in as objective reality. Why, I ask, should this one in particular obtain an all but universal acceptance?

I conclude, therefore, that these and similar theories are utterly unable to account for the all but universal belief both of civilized and savage men, that there is something in man which survives the dissolution of his body. How, then, can the belief have originated? I answer that inasmuch as it is

impossible that savage man can have arrived at it by a process of reasoning it must have been suggested by something which is inherent in the constitution of human nature.

I fully admit that neither of these five reasons, nor all five taken together, amount to what is designated a "scientific demonstration." But, as I have shown in a previous chapter, that form of reasoning is not the only one which is calculated to produce the conviction of absolute certainty on the human mind. I submit that the conjoint force of the arguments as above stated prove that man's personality will survive the dissolution of his body.

But that this belief is no phantom of the imagination, but has a reality corresponding to it, rests not merely on a course of reasoning, but on the evidence of fact. There is no more strongly attested fact in human history—I may say that there is no fact in history which has an equal attestation—than that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. His renewed life not only rests on the testimony of His followers, who believed that they held intercourse with Him after He rose from the dead—a testimony which all the theories which have been propounded by modern unbelief as affording a rational account of its origin, have been unable to shake; but is borne witness to alike by the history of the past and the facts of the present.

Space does not allow me to place the evidence on which this great fact rests before the reader here. For it I must refer him to my *Bampton Lectures*: "The Jesus of the Evangelists;" and, on a smaller scale, to my *Handbook of Christian Evidences*. I shall only observe in this place, that if the great character which is delineated in the Gospels be a creation of the imagination, the history of the past, and the facts of the present, are inexplicable. He Himself has affirmed of His own direct knowledge, and those who were commissioned by Him have taught, that our personal existence will not cease with the dissolution of our bodies; or in other words, that an existence awaits man after death.

The survival of our personal conscious existence after the dissolution of our bodies being thus established as a fact, consequences follow from it which have a most important bearing on the difficulties connected with Christian Theism. I do not say that it dissipates all of them, but it enables us to see our way to the solution of no inconsiderable number of them.

1. The first of the difficulties which have struck men in every age is the obvious inequality of the moral government of the world, if man perishes at death. If, however, this life is only the commencement of man's existence, the world beyond the grave will afford an ample sphere for the correction of those

apparent inequalities in the Divine government, the solution of which baffles our reason, if our existence is limited to the present life.

2. The survival of our conscious personality will afford an ample sphere for the vindication of the Divine justice in the government of the world which is obviously imperfect under the present order of things, and for the exercise of the Divine mercy.

3. It will also remove the difficulty caused by the want of opportunity for the exercise of those powers and faculties with which man is endowed, referred to in the previous argument, if human existence perishes at death. That opportunity which, for reasons into which we cannot penetrate, has been denied him here may be afforded him hereafter. This being so, the objection so often urged: Wherefore hast Thou made so large a portion of the human race in vain, falls to the ground.

4. It is a certain fact that the characters of a vast majority, even of Christian people, when they die are so imperfect as to render them unfit, without further purification, to enter into the society and the employments and enjoyments of the holy. Many imagine that the necessary change will be effected by a special interposition of the Divine power, but for this belief there is no foundation either in reason or in Revelation. We are assured, however, that in our Father's house there are many mansions; and there is nothing irrational in believing that some of

them may be adapted for completing the work of purification which was left imperfect here.

5. It is an obvious fact that an overwhelming majority of mankind pass the period of their probation here under very unfavourable conditions. This is true of vast numbers even in Christian countries. The unhappy condition of those who are born, and pass that portion of their lives in which the foundations of character are laid, in an atmosphere replete with vice and crime is such that I need not describe it. But nearly three-quarters of the human race at present in existence, have not only not had the benefit of the Christian revelation, but have perhaps not even heard of it. A future state will afford ample scope for the correction of these apparent inequalities; and the character which Christian Theism ascribes to God affords the strongest reason for believing that He will afford them those opportunities for the formation of a holy character which, for reasons into which we cannot penetrate, have been withheld from them here.

6. As we are at present constituted our bodies are the instruments through which we perceive, feel, think, and act; and their imperfections produce no small influence on our intellects, our characters, and our conduct. I need not attempt to prove this, for every one of us is only too painfully conscious of it, I will only refer to one example of it, the effect which a disordered nervous system exerts on our tempers.

But when death takes place our connection with our body will cease, and whatever influence for evil its imperfections exert upon us will cease with it. Our existence after our connection with our bodies ceases must be an existence under wholly different conditions from our present one, but what these conditions will be is known only to Him who knows all things.

The reader will observe that, throughout this work, I have avoided entering on the discussion of the question of man's natural immortality. My reason for adopting this course is that it is needless to do so, for all that my argument requires is, that our conscious personality, *i.e.* ourselves, should continue to exist for a period sufficiently long to afford opportunity for the vindication of the moral government of God—a vindication which our reason, conscience, and moral sense affirm to be impossible if our conscious existence is confined to the short term of our continuance here. To have discussed what is called the question of man's natural immortality would have involved the subject we have been considering in needless difficulties. One thing alone is certain—that the universe and everything in it is upheld in being by the energetic action of the Creator's will. In the words of the author of the Apocalypse: He has created all things; and through *His will* they are (that is, they exist) and were created. His energetic action upholds in existence both the evil and the

good. If, therefore, at any period of the future it is the will of the Creator to withdraw that energy, both alike must pass into non-existence. But into what that purpose is, no faculty of man can penetrate by any course of reasoning. It can only be known by a revelation.

I have only to observe, in conclusion, that the difficulties above referred to, and the moral government of God, assume a wholly different aspect if we contemplate human life as confined to the brief space of man's existence here, or as extended over the indefinite periods of time called in the New Testament "the age," "the ages," and "the ages of ages." Equally different is the aspect which it will assume if we view His government as limited to this inconsiderable globe, and those regions which in the Bible are designated Hades and Heaven; or as embracing the rational inhabitants of the universe of worlds, the existence of which the discoveries of modern astronomy have rendered indubitable. I say "rational inhabitants," because it is incredible, if these worlds exist in numbers which surpass the powers of human comprehension, that this world should be the only place where rational and moral beings exist. The whole universe of rational beings and moral agents, therefore, must form the subject of the government of God. If, then, it embraces all space, and extends to endless periods of time, who shall assign limits to the possibilities of the

future? or affirm that boundless power and wisdom, united with perfect holiness, justice, and benevolence, will not ultimately work out the greatest possible good, notwithstanding the clouds and darkness by which some of His present dispensations are surrounded?

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